OCTOBER 1953

COMMENTARY

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Study of Man Jewish-Gentile Intermarriage: Facts & Trends	HERSHEL SHANKS

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Norman Podhoretz — Will Herberg — Clement Greenberg

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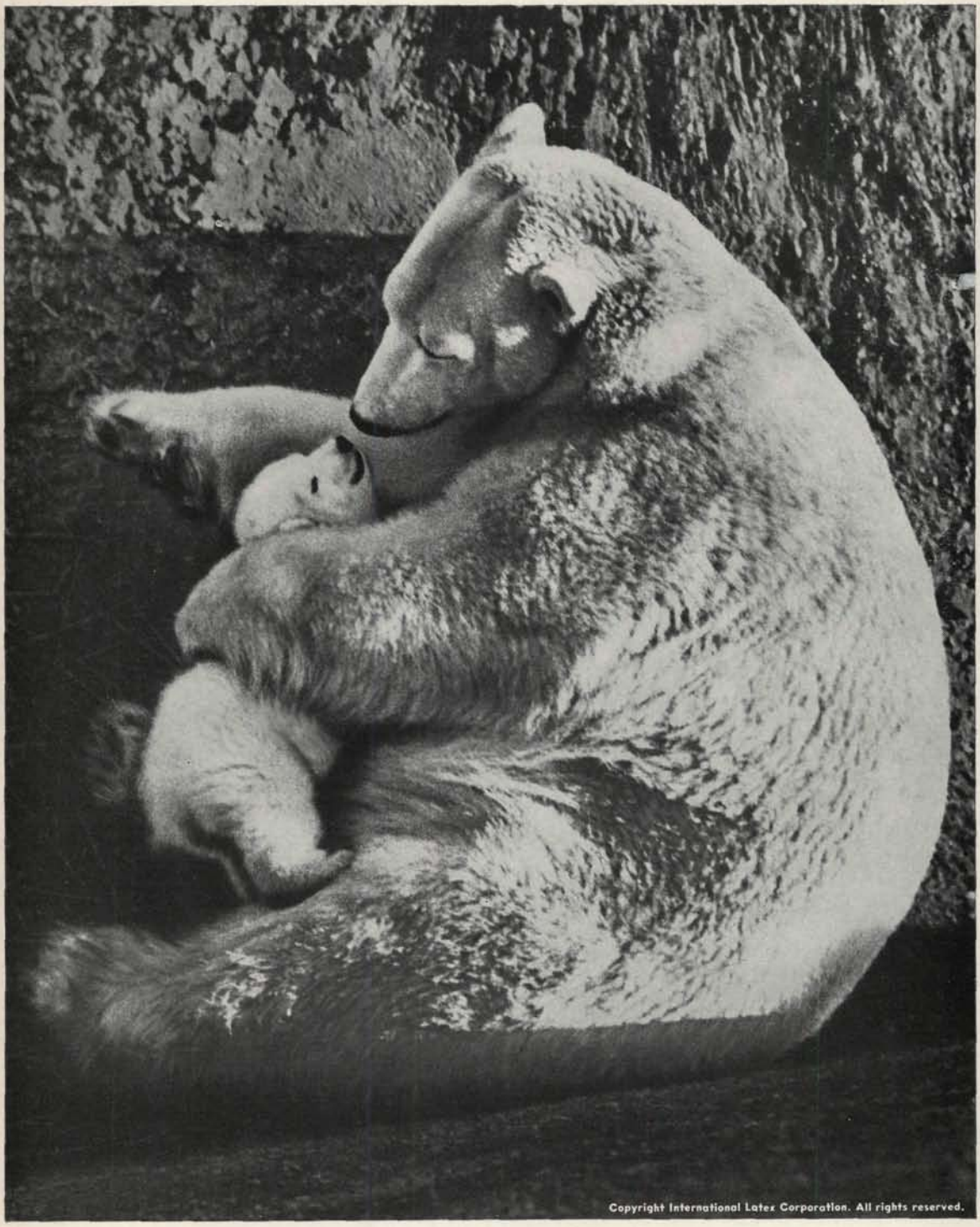

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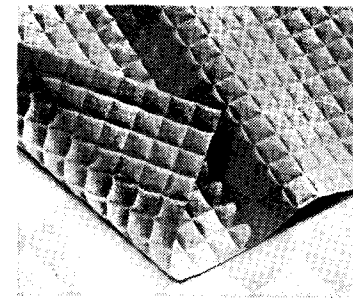

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

The Democrats Close Ranks *Hal Lavine*

Mr. Lavine's article in our July issue, "Can Eisenhower Form a Government?" evoked national comment. He reports now the curious optimism that pervaded the recent Democratic party conclave in Chicago, and what it is about the present Republican administration which prompts their hopes of a comeback.

The Backward Countries and the Cold War *G. L. Arnold*

The cold war, Mr. Arnold asserts, will be decided in the "backward countries," which in their desire for modernization are sorely tempted by the short cut of Communism. Mr. Arnold considers what alternative the West can offer them.

Yorkville, 1953 *Gerard H. Wilk*

Two decades ago New York's principal German neighborhood rang with the activities of Joe McWilliams and the Bund. Now all is peaceful again. But what goes on underneath the presumed "Gemütlichkeit" Gerard Wilk tells us.

A Pulpit Down South *Harry L. Golden*

Rabbi Geller of Temple Emanu-El of Elizabeth, North Carolina, gets the bad news that the trustees will not renew his contract. The rabbi's musings on his failure to make a "hit" thread the curiously mixed fabric of Jewish life and Jewish identity in the American South.

Dictators, Democracy, and Jews in Latin America *Benno Weiser*

In Latin America, Mr. Weiser points out, democracy does not necessarily protect Jews, nor does dictatorship necessarily threaten them. It depends on the democracy and on the dictator, and there is a wide variety of both below the Rio Grande.

Jew in the Steel Mills *Warner Bloomberg*

Mr. Bloomberg, himself a steelworker once, tells how the lack of Jewish representation among steelworkers causes problems when a Jew does appear – but problems explained perhaps more by astonishment than by anti-Semitism.

Conservative Judaism After Fifty Years *Fritz A. Rothschild*

Reporting on the recent convention of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, Mr. Rothschild points out that the opposition between traditional religion and modern life which Conservative Judaism originally hoped to resolve is still very much unresolved.

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COMMENTARY

CAN WE SAVE THE BILL OF HUMAN RIGHTS?

Opportunity for a New Start

MAX BEER

IN GENEVA from 1920 to 1939, I had the opportunity of watching the realization and development of the centuries-old dream of a League of Nations. When this League, born of the First World War, collapsed in a second and even more terrible world war which it was unable to prevent, I joined those who called for the establishment of a new league. When this new league miraculously came into being in 1945, I was able to observe its workings in all its fields of activity, from the hopeful beginnings at Hunter College in the Bronx, through the disappointing crises in the Sperry Gyroscope factory at Lake Success, to the glassy magnificence on the shores of the East River. And once again I have had reason to doubt the wisdom of governments, and the will to live of peoples, even the very possibility of significant progress in the relations of men and of nations with each other. Will this second great experiment follow the tragic path of the first?

THE United Nations was created to establish international solidarity against aggression, and to protect human rights internationally. People are prone to forget that the latter aim was once considered the primary one. The years since 1945 have seen a steady weakening in all countries of the endeavor to back up the human rights clauses of the UN Charter with an international bill of rights that would implement them. (Many Americans, we may add, have been troubled in particular by the failure of their own government to continue its earlier leadership in the international struggle for human rights.) But the situation is not hopeless, MAX BEER writes in this appraisal of the causes of past failures and the challenge and opportunities that still remain. Dr. Beer, a leading authority on human rights, was closely connected with the work of the League of Nations from beginning to end, and with the United Nations since its inception, at times in an official capacity, at other times as a journalist. He is the author of numerous books and articles dealing with the problems of international organizations.

The Lessons of the First League

THE first League of Nations shattered on the fact that its basic prerequisite was an international solidarity which, though indeed proclaimed, was never in fact established. First, the League did not provide for the obligatory creation of an international military force, which would have given practical expression to the principle of international solidarity. Second, it forgot that solidarity *among nations* is an empty phrase without solidarity *among men*. Did not everyone later recognize that the suppression of human rights in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany fatefully imperiled world peace, and that the "New Order" *inside* the totalitarian states was only the first step toward a "New Order" *for the world*? Nevertheless neither the Covenant nor any precedent had made injury to human rights a subject of international concern. When the Nazi persecution of Jews began, the League of Na-

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tions was limited to putting a temporary stop to it in Upper Silesia where until 1935 there was an internationally guaranteed minority statute. Against the frightful excesses in the rest of Germany the League could do nothing. I myself lived through this tragic impotence in all its depressing particulars, but I prefer to cite here the testimony of another eyewitness, René Cassin, offered in a statement to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations on June 15, 1948: "I was personally present at the dramatic debates which took place at Geneva between March and October 1933. At that time, the only way the criminal actions of Hitler Germany towards her own nationals could be brought to the notice of the Council of the League of Nations was to resort to the indirect procedure of invoking the Polish-German treaty on the protection of minorities concluded in 1922. On the day on which the Assembly dared to refer to the general principles authorizing the legally organized international community to protect human rights even in a sphere not covered by some special minority treaty, Hitler took advantage of the Third Reich's absolute sovereignty over its citizens and denied the League of Nations any right of control; and on October 14, 1933, Germany left the League. It is well known what attacks against national independence and what massacres sprang from the impunity with which Hitler's first great crimes were committed."

The Pledges of the UN Charter

THE absence of an international military force and the failure to guarantee the rights of the individual were the gaping holes in the fabric of the League of Nations, and it was through these that the Second World War forced its way in. The Charter of the United Nations sought to stop up these holes. It imposed on all member nations the duty of supplying contingents in case of aggression, and provided for the establishment in advance of an international air force. And it decreed "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion." In the first article of the Charter, respect for human rights was given equal importance with the preservation of peace and security, as a primary purpose of the world organization. In the early announcements the protection of human rights was even declared to be the more fundamental of the two purposes, embracing the other within it.

The seed of the first League had been Woodrow Wilson's thesis of the *rights of all nations*; the seed of the second league was Franklin D. Roosevelt's proclamation in January 1941 of the *rights of all human beings*: the Four Freedoms—freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, freedom from fear. To be sure, this new conception of international cooperation was to be obscured by the statesmen of the great powers in the course of formulating the Charter. Their draft Charter—the Dumbarton Oaks proposal of 1944—referred to "respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" in only one place, the chapter on International Economic Cooperation. But numerous governments, as well as nongovernmental organizations (the most active of which were American), conducted a vigorous campaign against this neglect of the crucial lessons taught by the recent tragic past. Thanks to these efforts the international protection of human rights received its proper place of honor in the final text of the Charter.

Indeed the obligation of the organization and its members to carry out the protection of human rights runs imperatively through the whole Charter. The second paragraph of the preamble proclaims "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women." According to Article 13, one of the duties of the General Assembly is "to initiate studies and make recommendations for assisting in the realization of human rights for all without distinction." In the chapter on International Economic and Social Cooperation, Article 55 requires that the UN "promote universal respect for, and observation of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction." The Economic and Social Council is empowered by Article 62 to make recommendations for the sake of "promoting respect for, and observation of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all," and Article 68 gives it the task of setting up a *commission for the promotion of human rights*. Article 76 states that one of the basic objectives of the international trusteeship system is "to

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encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction . . . and to encourage recognition of the interdependence of the peoples of the world."

The International Bill of Rights

SOME delegates at San Francisco wanted to go beyond these directives and immediately write into the Charter or add to it as an appendix an international Bill of Human Rights, for which detailed proposals were already available. The plan was "received with sympathy" in the competent committee of the Conference, but it was decided that the proposal could be dealt with more effectively when the organization was once formed, and it was directed "that the General Assembly consider the proposal and give it effect."

Thus at the time the UN was founded, no doubt existed that the Charter provisions were to lead to the development of an international Bill of Rights at the earliest possible date. At the signing of the Charter on June 26, 1945, President Truman said:

"Under this document we have good reason to expect the framing of an International Bill of Rights, acceptable to all the nations involved. That Bill of Rights will be as much a part of international life as our own Bill of Rights is a part of our Constitution. The Charter is dedicated to the achievement and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Unless we can attain those objectives for all men and women everywhere—without regard to race, language, or religion—we cannot have permanent peace and security."

Defining in December 1945 the terms of reference of the Human Rights Commission called for in the Charter, the Preparatory Commission for the UN set at the head of its tasks the "formulation of an International Bill of Human Rights." And when the so-called nuclear Human Rights Commission held its first meeting in the Bronx on April 29, 1946, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Professor Henri Laugier, the first Assistant Secretary General of the UN in charge of social and humanitarian affairs, defined as follows the task of the Commission and the UN in the field of human rights: "You will have before you," he declared, "the difficult but essential problem of defining the violations of human rights within a nation which would constitute a menace to the security and peace of the world and the existence of which would put in operation the mechanism for the maintenance of peace and security. You will have to suggest the establishment of machinery of observation which will find and denounce the violation of the rights of man all over the world."

Calling for practical and effective measures, the Human Rights Commission in its first report to the Economic and Social Council declared that "each member state must feel bound to adopt, in accordance with its system of government, measures to safeguard the observance and to provide against the violation of those rights and freedoms that are proclaimed in an International Bill," and it pointed to "the need for an *international agency of implementation* entrusted with the task of watching over the general observance of human rights . . . in order to prevent the recurrence of acts as monstrous as those which formed the prelude to the Second World War."

Thus in the initial conception of the UN collective security and the protection of individual liberties, an international army and an international Bill of Rights, the General Staff Committee of the Security Council and the Human Rights Commission of the Economic and Social Council: all this was seen as molded in an indissoluble unity.

The Decline

BUT today, when people bewail the "decline of the United Nations," they think almost exclusively of its system of collective security and scarcely ever of its program for the protection of human rights.

True, the Security Council, to which the Charter assigned the "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace," and in which the unanimity of the five permanent members was required for all important decisions, was crippled after a few months by the break between East and West and the numerous Russian vetoes, and was unable to carry out its functions of settling conflicts and ordering obligatory sanctions against aggressors. True, also, the five-power General Staff Committee likewise became unable to take any steps either for the creation of an international air force in constant

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readiness, or for the organization of contingents from the member states to take action in case of aggression. But in the case of collective security the United Nations did not let matters rest at this impasse. First the Western powers sought a substitute for "universal" security by establishing the regional North Atlantic Pact, which they brought into the established framework of the United Nations. Then, in October 1950, after the Communist aggression in Korea, the General Assembly moved under vigorous American leadership to build a new universal security system through the resolution "Uniting for Peace." This new system replaced the decision of the Security Council, binding on all members, with recommendations of the General Assembly; in place of the General Staff Committee of the great powers, it established an Assembly committee for collective measures, alongside which it set a committee for the observation of peace. No one, of course, can overlook either the serious gaps in the system or the disappointments of the first collective action in Korea. The weakness of a military apparatus set up on a voluntary basis is all too plain, particularly when the aggressor is a great military power. But it must be recognized that in the face of an urgent peril the organization did not capitulate, that in Korea it did not repeat the shameful performance of the first League in the case of Ethiopia. The new Charter obligations with respect to solidarity among nations were upheld; the way to the future remained open.

But what about the second vital obligation distinguishing the new league from the old —the obligation to protect human rights? In this field, the UN, alas, moved, first slowly and then at an accelerated tempo, away from the lesson of the Second World War and of the law of San Francisco, until it has lost sight of both the immediate goal of protecting the rights of every individual in the world and the further goal of buttressing the fragile solidarity of nations with the solidarity of mankind.

Scattered Efforts

In drawing a picture of this fateful slipping away from the heights of 1945-46, we may pass over (without underestimating their value for the development of international law) the many labors on partial problems in which the UN and its organs scattered and exhausted their energies for eight years: investigations and draft agreements on freedom of information, which had no practical consequences and would in essential respects have limited that freedom more than they would have furthered it; studies and resolutions on combatting discrimination and protecting the rights of minorities, which were disregarded and often gave one a sense of nostalgia for the more solid, even if regionally limited, system of protection for minorities under the old League of Nations; proposals, resolutions, and a convention on the rights of women, which have great propaganda value but can hardly work in the midst of the vacuum which exists in all the rest of the field of human rights. Even the convention against genocide, designed to prevent the mass slaughter of peoples, exists today only on paper.

As for the direct steps undertaken by organs of the UN to resist attacks on human rights, here too results have been slim; no systematic general activity has grown out of the many good resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly. Directed principally against the practice of forced labor, the retention of war prisoners behind the Iron Curtain, and the racial policies of South Africa, these resolutions, though useful in enlightening world opinion, have remained without practical consequences. Finally the Security Council, from which in 1946 so much had been hoped in the protection of human rights, disappointed us when this subject came up for discussion in it. The Western democracies themselves endorsed the acceptance as members of the United Nations of states in which the elementary democratic freedoms were lacking, and which offered no sort of guarantee for their observance of the Charter articles on human rights. Further, in all these matters there was a continuous uncertainty in regard to the *competence* of the organization, which was challenged in many quarters on the basis of Article 2, Paragraph 7, of the Charter, which forbids intervention in matters "essentially within the domestic jurisdiction"—a provision which, as many delegates have rightly pointed out, is in no way applicable to the obligation to protect human rights.

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All the lopsided activity of the Human Rights Commission and its subcommissions, the well-meaning but unorganized attempts at direct action by the General Assembly, the passivity of the Security Council, might be considered as transitional phenomena if the United Nations had seriously occupied itself with the chief task: *the preparation of an International Bill of Rights.* But it was precisely in this essential undertaking that the fateful decline revealed itself most strikingly.

"Declaration" and "Covenant"

UNTIL the middle of 1947 the Human Rights Commission eagerly and earnestly worked on its Bill of Rights, using as its bases of discussion the Latin American proposals made at San Francisco; new proposals from the United States, England, France, and especially the Human Rights division of the Secretariat itself, whose constant efforts to fulfill the promises of the Charter deserve recognition; the classic bills of human rights of the past; the constitutional provisions of many countries; additional material supplied by non-governmental organizations; and various proposals for implementation. It seemed in 1947 as if it would soon be possible to circulate the great International Bill of Rights to the entire UN membership.

But in July 1947, in the Drafting Committee of the Human Rights Commission, which was to give the Bill of Rights its final form, the idea came up of splitting it into two instruments: a Declaration of Human Rights, to be adopted by the General Assembly in the form of a recommendation without any legally binding character and without provisions for implementation, and a Covenant or multilateral treaty, which would contain provisions for implementation and would, after its approval by the General Assembly, be signed and ratified by those states which wished to do so. When this proposal became the basis of the further work of the Human Rights Commission, it was still expected that "both parts" of the Bill of Rights would be simultaneously completed and brought before the General Assembly. But what happened was exactly what many opponents of the division had feared. In 1948, at a solemn session in Paris, the General Assembly adopted the first "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." When the General Assembly met in 1953—five years later!—there were still only proposals for the "second part," the Covenant on Human Rights, proposals to be adopted—perhaps—in 1954. And this Covenant had again been divided into two parts: a Covenant on political and civil rights, and another on economic, social, and cultural rights.

The Illusion of the "Declaration"

THUS today we have only the "Declaration." Taken by themselves the thirty articles of this manifesto are unquestionably a worthwhile achievement, often reminiscent, in their language and emphasis, of the American Declaration of Independence, the American Bill of Rights, and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. It is certainly not useless that Article 1 asserts that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights"; that they are "endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood"; that no "distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" is permissible. One reads with satisfaction the well-edited and thought-out Articles which follow on the right to life, liberty, and security of person; the prohibition of slavery in all forms, and of all inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the assurance of equality before the law, protection against arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile; the right to fair and public hearing by independent tribunals; to protection against interference in privacy; freedom of movement and residence; the right to asylum; the right to a nationality; the right to found a family and to own property; the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, and expression; the right to peaceful assembly and association; the right to take part in freely elected governments and the right to access to public service; the right to social security, to work, to equal pay for equal work, to just remuneration; the right to join trade unions; the right to a good standard of living, to adequate food, housing, medical care; the right to education and the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the nation; the right to a social and international order realizing fully the development of the personality; and so on.

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These Articles comprise a remarkably full category of human rights—or, rather, of desirable human rights. Indeed, the beautiful and moving preamble specifically notifies us that we must look on these thirty articles as a list of wishes, as a "common standard of achievement to the end that individuals and every organ of society . . . shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for rights and freedoms" and "by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition." The Declaration is thus simply a moral directive without any commitments, any organs or procedure for its implementation and the redress of grievances. It is a sort of textbook for those who are willing to learn from it. This strictly pedagogical and propagandistic character sufficiently explains why the Declaration was accepted without opposition.

Newly formed states, amid general applause, allowed themselves the luxury of writing the Declaration into their shiny new constitutions. On the anniversary of its acceptance, December 10, the propaganda services of the United Nations celebrate this great step forward by solemn ceremonies and leaflets and film strips. *But where in the world has the Universal Declaration actually promoted effective observance of human rights?* The five years of its existence have in fact been years of steady *retrogression* in individual liberties, of increasing violations of the most elementary human rights, not only behind the Iron Curtain but also in countries of the free world, particularly in Asia, in the Middle East, in Latin America, in South Africa. At the same time the unbridled propaganda for the Declaration has obstructed the struggle for human rights by fostering the illusion that aims which should be fought for more vigorously than ever have already been accomplished.

The Fiasco of the Covenants

THE atmosphere created by a Declaration conceived and exploited in this manner, owing its existence to the very desire to avoid or postpone genuinely binding obligations, could scarcely promote the work on the Covenant or Covenants. In fact this work became steadily more difficult, more involved, and slower, moving back and forth between the Human Rights Commission, the Economic and Social Council to which the Commission was responsible, the General Assembly to which the latter was in turn responsible, and the sixty individual member states which were constantly being consulted. Directives were repeatedly changed and those already accepted were again placed in question. The composition of different organs (eighteen members in the Commission and in the Economic and Social Council, sixty in the Assembly) led to a continual confusion in the formulation of policy. In the middle of the work the compositions of the Commission and of the Council changed, and delegates and governments revised their attitudes. It also became clear that not only many delegates in the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, but also some experts in the Human Rights Commission itself, lacked the prerequisite for the difficult and important job: an unflagging devotion to the high goal and a strong and abiding sense that they were working in the interest and on behalf of the whole world. The protracted debates, often lost in technicalities, easily degenerated into propaganda and political clashes in which national viewpoints were presented under the guise of legal or humanitarian arguments; and the national viewpoints in question were by no means always those of the *peoples* concerned, but represented more often simply the narrow bureaucratic concepts of the encrusted ministerial departments, inspired not by the desire to secure effective protection of human rights, but rather by the desire to protect their governments *against* the protection of human rights, i.e., against increased claims by their peoples and against "foreign" intervention.

This tendency resulted of course in far more "careful" definitions than in the Declaration, and in numerous limitations of rights, often going beyond what is normal and necessary in a legal document. It was responsible for the previously mentioned division of the Covenant into two treaties, for the fact that such rights as the right to asylum, to a nationality, and to freedom of movement and residence, which appeared in the Declaration, are missing in the drafts for the Covenants. It explains also the place of honor given to articles serving purely political purposes, such as the article on national self-determination.

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One might still see the drafts under consideration as a significant and sound achievement—one might agree even to more cautious and limited provisions—if the one essential requirement were fulfilled. This requirement, which was regarded as self-evident in 1945-46, is *compulsory and effective international implementation*. But where are the "practical and effective measures" promised in the preparatory Human Rights Commission in the spring of 1946? Where is the "international agency entrusted with the task of watching over the general observance of human rights" called for "in order to prevent the recurrence of acts as monstrous as those which formed the prelude to the Second World War"? Many delegates, as well as non-governmental organizations which participate in the work of the Human Rights Commission in an advisory capacity, made precise proposals for the fulfillment of these promises. And now and again in the shuttling back and forth of decisions from one organ of the United Nations to another, it seemed as if they had won a majority; but each victory was again swept away.

No Right of Complaint

If we confine ourselves to the results of the last Geneva session of the Human Rights Commission, the system of implementation is envisaged as follows:

The individual whose rights are disregarded or violated is denied the most elementary of all human rights: the right of complaint. No individual or group petitions may be directed to the international authorities; even the non-governmental organizations *accredited by the United Nations,* through whom the gagged individuals might find a voice, are included in this denial of the right of complaint. The excellent plan for the appointment of an Attorney-General or High Commissioner for Human Rights, who would on his own initiative take up violations of these rights, has not even been considered. According to the proposed text, a complaint of violation of the Covenants by a signatory state *can only come from another signatory state.* This procedure, as various delegates and the representatives of non-governmental organizations have emphasized again and again, is obviously nonsensical, for it would hardly be used by any state on friendly terms with the state violating human rights. Used by states on unfriendly terms, it would become a political weapon pure and simple, and would nullify the purpose of making the protection of human rights an international *cooperative* endeavor in the interest of peace and security. The result would be, not the effective protection of the violated individual rights, but the transformation of a conflict between a government and its citizens into a conflict between two states.

This exclusion of the individual from a system for the protection of individual rights is even more disturbing when one recalls that in the incomplete system of minority protection under the old League of Nations the right of individual petition did exist, and that the Charter of the United Nations recognizes such a right for the inhabitants of trusteeship territories.

Mediation, Not Enforcement

In addition, the procedure envisaged for dealing with complaints is far less likely to protect the threatened rights of an individual than to protect a guilty state against complaints. The international authority is to be a mediating body, its procedure is to be one of appeasement, and this mediation and appeasement is conceived as taking place between the complainant and defendant states, not between the defendant state and its citizens. Furthermore, the international authority is to be not an organism representing the United Nations itself, but a "Human Rights Committee" whose members, though independent and chosen by the International Court of Justice, must be nationals of the signatory states.

The actual course of procedure is to be in five stages:

1. The complaining state turns first, not to the Human Rights Committee, but to the state which it is accusing.

2. The accused state can give the complainant an explanation within three months.

3. If within six months after the complaint the two states have not reached a satisfactory settlement between themselves, either can refer the case to the Human Rights Committee.

4. The Human Rights Committee asks both states for information on the case, ascertains the facts, and places its good of-

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fices at their disposal for a friendly solution, but as a rule only if all domestic remedies in the accused state have been exhausted.

5. Not more than eighteen months after the case is brought to it, the Committee is to prepare a report, to be published by the United Nations, in which if no settlement has been achieved the breach of treaty obligations is to be determined. The minority members of the Committee may add their dissenting opinions.

Here the task of the Committee ends. No further step is envisaged except the voluntary reference of the case to the International Court of Justice by the complainant or the defendant state.

This procedure, which can stretch out to two years without leading to any result, can be shortened only in "very serious and urgent cases." But even in such cases the Human Rights Committee *has no right to take the initiative* itself. In addition, the entire procedure applies at present only to the Covenant on political and civil rights, while the draft on economic, social, and cultural rights still lacks a system of implementation; in this case, some delegates would like to devise one even more harmless and ineffective.

Who will assert that the international legislators in San Francisco wanted such a situation? Who will recognize in this 1953 parody of implementation the machinery referred to in the Human Rights Commission in 1946? Adolf Hitler would have laughed at this "threat" to his barbaric policies, a "threat" which would have permitted him, during the long and worthless mediation procedure—assuming that any state would have dared to set it in motion—to take away the rights of the last Jews, to imprison them, to drive them to suicide—without their having any right of complaint!

Rights in Charter Debased

In other words, the tragedy of 1933 would have played itself out under the system of protection of human rights now before the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1953 almost as it did twenty years ago under the League of Nations. After eight years, nothing can conceal the fact that the labors of the United Nations on the promised International Bill of Rights have failed. But infinitely more serious is the fact that in the course of these labors the Charter provisions on human rights have themselves been progressively devalued in the eyes of governments and public opinion.

The Universal Declaration itself—the so-called "first part" of the Bill of Rights—has already had this effect. While defining Human Rights in detail, it declares these definitions not legally but only morally binding. Consequently the Charter provisions themselves, which did not indeed specify the individual human rights by name, are in danger of losing their prestige as obligations binding on all member states and falling back into the limbo of purely moral obligations.

An even greater devaluation of the Charter—and for that matter of the Declaration—necessarily developed out of the involved and time-consuming disputes over the drafting of one or more Covenants. For this has encouraged the belief that *only* those human rights contained in the future treaties, and only to the extent and with the restrictions recognized in them, are to be international obligations and internationally guaranteed. Moreover, even these obligations and these guarantees are to be valid not for all of the United Nations, but only for those states voluntarily signing and ratifying the Covenants. And we have long known that the number of states that will sign and ratify the Covenants will be much smaller than the number of members of the world organization.

The Soviet Union and its allies have from the beginning brutally refused to accept any convention with provisions for international implementation, however meager. And at the opening of the last session of the Human Rights Commission the representative of the United States declared that it would sign neither of the two conventions, and submitted instead a new program calling for annual reports from member states on the status of human rights, recommending advisory services for the promotion of human rights, and proposing the initiation by the Human Rights Commission of a series of studies of specific human rights on a worldwide basis.

If the United States can invoke its own Bill of Rights and the great development of human freedoms in this country as a reason for lack of interest in *international* guaran-

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tees, many other countries, with no such tradition of rights as exists in the United States, may nevertheless adopt a similar position. And if, as seems probable, many other states fail to sign the two conventions for more specific reasons—among them the as yet unsettled question of their application in federal states—what is left of the Bill of Rights—and of the Charter?

In place of a universally valid Bill of Rights, we then have Covenants valid only for a narrow circle of states, and even these offering no guarantees. And these useless Covenants may have the effect of *releasing* all other members of the United Nations, perhaps the majority, from the obligation to protect human rights which they undertook by accepting the Charter. The result of the last eight years is thus not a development of human rights on the basis of the Charter, but a sort of backstairs revision of the Charter provisions to restrict these rights—and by that token, also, *an undermining of the whole system for the preservation of peace and security.*

No Impetus Remains

Most governments and delegations even yet do not realize the extent of the retrogression. But if they do recognize it in part, they reject responsibility for it. On the one hand, the most flagrant scorners and suppressors of human rights, the Russians and their Communist friends, are denounced as the sole obstacle. Others regret the excessive caution of the United States, especially in regard to the right of petition and economic rights. Another obstacle to which some point is the legalistic and nationalistic attitude of the smaller states, particularly those of America and Asia. And, more generally, the blame is laid on the great political, economic, and philosophical differences even within the non-Communist world.

But there is another much more serious and much more basic cause, chiefly psychological in character, without which the various particular phenomena would not have had so obstructive an effect. This prime cause is the fading away of the convictions which led the San Francisco Conference in 1945 to regard the international protection of human rights *as one of the essential bases* for international cooperation *in the interest of peace and security.*

Our memories of the crimes of Hitler and Mussolini, and of the fate of the first League of Nations, have faded, and with them has gone the sense of urgency in the problem of international protection of human rights. Today the chief concern of the people of civilized nations is the atrocities of Russia and her Communist satellites. But against these we feel powerless, and they therefore do not serve, as the Nazi atrocities did, to the *active* advancement of human rights. This is psychologically understandable, but politically and from a humanitarian point of view it is one of the greatest sins of omission of our time. For the only way to strike at the root of the Communist policy of violation of human rights is of course to build a strong and purposeful united front outside the Soviet bloc for the defense of these rights. Have we not seen the effect which American food parcels piled up in front of the Iron Curtain have had on the Communist zone of Germany? Would it not be worth the effort to build up an impressive international system of protection of human rights before the eyes of the oppressed masses of the East, even hungrier spiritually than they are physically? Would not hundreds of thousands, even millions, of hands be stretched out for this "parcel" too?

The failure to pursue an active human rights policy has on the contrary permitted the Russians to make their disregard of all freedoms appear less sensational, and even to assume the role of "pioneers" in the fields of economic, social, and cultural rights! The United Nations Charter, which could not have come into existence without Russia's agreement, did not proclaim democracy as an essential prerequisite for membership in an international league for peace. But since it demanded respect for and promotion of human rights from all member states, it indirectly of course demanded respect for and promotion of democratic institutions. For what is democracy except the guarantee of human rights? The UN Charter offered an opportunity to compel Russia and her satellites either to make concessions to democracy, or else to find their totalitarian form of government isolated like the pestilence. Thus the failure to carry out the terms of the Charter becomes a failure to advance democracy in the world. The Communists are the real beneficiaries of the

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tragic fall from the heights of 1945 and 1946.

In 1945 it was said with just pride that for the first time in history an international organ for human rights, the Human Rights Commission specifically mentioned in the Charter, had been established. Today this commission has been virtually submerged in the mass of the subordinate bodies of the Economic and Social Council, scarcely more important or more respected than the Transport and Communications Commission, the Fiscal Commission, or the Population Commission, less involved in the realities of contemporary international life than the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the High Commissariat for Refugees. The Human Rights Commission has not even been able to take any kind of active notice of the thousands of petitions—called "communications"—which pour ceaselessly into the UN from all over the world, protesting against violations of human rights, only to disappear, apparently forever, into the confidential archives.

The close tie between protection of human rights and collective security has been severed, and is used now only for demagogic purposes, usually by the Communists when, under the pretext of combatting war and hate propaganda, they try to suppress the right of free expression of opinion even in the free world.

Lack of Leadership

THE impulse has withered away, and in contrast to the way the principle of collective security was rescued by extension of the franchise of the Assembly in October 1950, in the resolution "Uniting for Peace," none of the great powers has encouraged a new start in the field of human rights. And yet the new procedure established by the resolution offered a great opportunity to do just that. The International League for the Rights of Man suggested that the protection of human rights be included in the system, and that the mandate of the new Peace Observation Commission be broadened for this purpose. The Commission was assigned the task of observing and reporting on the situation "in any area where there exists international tension the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security," and the proposal was simply to add to the list of sources of tensions the violation of human rights. This suggestion was not taken up; all that happened was the addition of an eloquent passage simply inviting member states to promote respect for human rights in the interests of peace.

In truth the great powers had almost withdrawn to the narrow platform of the original Dumbarton Oaks proposals, which they had been forced to enlarge only by the smaller powers and above all by the non-governmental organizations in the great crusade of 1945. Gradually many of these smaller powers joined the retreat, and even among the non-governmental organizations, whose advisory functions established in the Charter had meanwhile been greatly circumscribed, the heroic impulse was often lost. Thus it comes about that in 1953 the activity of the United Nations in the field of human rights has reached the same level and moves in the same tempo as the classic debates on disarmament which began in the first League of Nations and continue monotonously in the second. Protection of human rights has become a matter which is dealt with only because it is on the agenda and cannot be removed; but no one believes in it any longer—or so it seems.

1955: A New Start?

IS THERE no path which might lead back to the heights of 1945-46?

The Founding Fathers of the UN had the wisdom to provide in Article 109 for a General Conference of all member states to undertake the revision of the Charter. The question of calling such a conference must automatically be placed on the agenda of the tenth regular session of the General Assembly, in the fall of 1955, ten years after the founding of the world organization. And this call can be issued by a simple majority of the General Assembly and seven affirmative votes in the Security Council, *with no right to veto*. To be sure, the decisions of the General Conference will then require a two-thirds majority, and ratification can subsequently be blocked by a great-power veto. But first there will be the debate on human rights—just as on other problems, including the better organization of collective security without the veto.

Indeed, even in this year's session of the

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General Assembly, steps preparatory to the general conference on revision of the Charter will offer opportunities for fruitful discussion and leadership. The Netherlands Delegation has already proposed that the General Secretariat undertake at once a study of the UN's record on applications of the Charter during the past eight years, and that the member states be consulted in advance of the tenth session as to their views on the desirability of revision and on the direction such revision might take. So the next two years may already offer an opportunity for some thoroughgoing reexamination of the human rights problem and new creative thinking.

What can be hoped for from all this, and above all from the contemplated General Conference?

The General Conference could take note of the devaluation of the Charter provisions on the protection of human rights, and by *making them more precise* pave the way to the fulfillment of the promise of the initial period. It could begin where the San Francisco Conference, mistakenly trusting in the zeal of all member states, left off, and could *specify the human rights and fundamental freedoms by name* and make it unmistakably clear that without any further action they are legally as well as morally binding obligations.

It could clearly and plainly assign to the Security Council and the General Assembly *the authority to oversee and enforce these obligations.*

It could give the citizens of all lands a reasonably defined and organized right of petition.

It could raise the status of the Human Rights Commission, dedicated to the rights of *all* men, from that of a cog in the machinery of the Economic and Social Council, to a *Human Rights Council,* equal to the Trusteeship Council which is concerned only with the rights of some colonial peoples.

It could even do what some governments thought should have been done eight years ago by the San Francisco Conference: *write the International Bill of Human Rights into the Charter or add it as an appendix.*

Let us see whether it may not be possible to secure a two-thirds majority for a new bold approach by the free world, and whether a Russian veto will then frustrate the will of the world. In the long run, decisions and ratification may be less important than the *revaluation* which the great debate will make possible, the chance for a rebirth of enthusiasm and inspiration.

In any case the demand for a fundamental discussion of the whole human rights problem by the General Conference opens the only way out of the present blind alley. The task of those governments, and above all of the non-governmental organizations which contributed to the program of 1945, must be now to concentrate on the preparation of the General Conference of 1955. They must press for its summoning and insist that it go thoroughly into the question of human rights. They must work out clear and good proposals, and avoid all the obstacles which could prevent an unfettered and trail-blazing debate on the subject. If we have waited eight years for results, we can wait two years more. And if this debate should also come to naught, then the world will know where it stands. The peoples of the world will at least have had the chance to listen to the debate, and if it is cut short, they will hear the silence.

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WHY ISRAEL MISUNDERSTANDS AMERICAN JEWRY

Some Ways of Closing the Rift

MAURICE SAMUEL

TWO sets of forces play upon American and Israeli Jewries, one driving them apart, the other pulling them together. The first of them I described last month; in the present article I shall discuss both of them and try to show their roots in the past, their evolution, and their interplay with the character of America.

FORTY years ago—I confine myself to the period of personal observation—the Zionist movement in this country had its strongest support among the Yiddish-speaking and foreign-born. Even among these it was a minority movement, weaker than the Socialist non-Zionist and anti-Zionist movements. Nor did it consist entirely, as we often think in romantic moments, of creative and affirmative concepts as distinguished from the palliative and negative. There was a perpetual tug of war between Zionism as renaissance and Zionism as refugeeism, between Messianism and "relief."

IN LAST month's COMMENTARY, MAURICE SAMUEL warned that the continuing deprecation of American Jewry by Israelis would create a real rift between the two leading Jewish communities of the world. Mr. Samuel here criticizes the Israeli view that denies the possibility of the survival of a decent Jewish life in the United States—and that indeed sees the only alternative to doom their wholesale migration to "the Jewish homeland." He holds this to be in contradiction to Jewish history and tradition, and to the plain facts. Mr. Samuel, one of the leading spirits in the Zionist movement in the United States, was born in Rumania in 1895, and is the author of a number of books, the most recent of which are *The Devil That Failed* (1952), *The Gentleman and the Jew* (1950), and *Prince of the Ghetto* (1948). Much of the material for this article is drawn from a book, *Level Sunlight,* to be published October 19 by Knopf.

The First World War increased that tension. A great philanthropic activity developed in American Jewry during and after the war in behalf of the ruined Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. This was not a partisan enterprise; it enrolled Zionists, non-Zionists, and anti-Zionists. But it had a peculiar partisan effect on the Zionist movement.

In that great philanthropic action the Americanized non-Zionists and anti-Zionists, though numerically weaker, were far stronger financially than the Zionists. They were also troubled by inner insecurity. Their impulse to help needy Jews in other countries was spontaneous and honest; they had, however, to take the maximum safeguards against being misunderstood by non-Jews. They wanted it known that this was purely philanthropic action; it did not imply a special and compromising bond with citizens or subjects of foreign countries. Even when Americanized Jews like Louis Marshall fought at the Versailles peace conference for the political minority rights of Polish Jews, it meant no more than, it was said, England's efforts on behalf of Rumanian Jews at the Congress of Berlin. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, safeguarding the political rights of the defenseless—it was all straightforward humanitarianism: the Jewish side of it was ostensibly incidental.

The long exile life of the Jewish people had developed in them a special technique of public action. The collection box was the foundation of our domestic and foreign policy. It was our army, our navy, and our State Department. We relieved the needy in our communities, we ransomed captives, we bought ourselves out—when we could—from the clutches of tyrants on the proceeds of the charity appeal. Fight we could not,

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except to commit suicide: but we committed suicide only at the stake, proclaiming, till the last moment, the unity of God. Thus the management of our affairs was accompanied by a perpetual weeping at the front doors of the Jewish rich and the back doors of the Gentile powerful; and when part of the Jewish people was stirred by the call to rebuild a Jewish homeland there were some who, in the new movement, the renaissance movement, retained the habitual attitude of mendicancy. They wanted to weep their way to a Jewish state.

Then, after the First World War, Zionists found themselves in double competition with non-Zionists and anti-Zionists. There was the purely philanthropic activity of the relief campaigns, within which Zionists were as zealous as the rest; there was also the rebuilding of the Jewish homeland, to which Zionists were compelled to give an additional philanthropic twist because that was the prevalent tone of Jewish public-spiritedness. The creative, redemptive, curative, and spiritual side of Zionism was correspondingly weakened.

The building of the Jewish homeland had to be financed entirely by voluntary contributions. There were no grants-in-aid from America, no loans from international banks in those days. All that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate gave us was the precarious right to pay our way. Everyone, from Weizmann down, was pulled into the fund-raising campaigns; and these were, as they are till this day, mixtures of public spirit, imaginative kindness, publicity-hunting, social pressure, cajolery, professional slickness, sentimentality, Jewish loyalty, high-pressure salesmanship, advertising stunts, and nostalgic echoes of forgotten pieties. There was a continuous struggle between educational effort and surrender to techniques. The visiting Zionist teachers of those days—Weizmann, Shmarya Levin, Bialik, aided to some extent by the American leadership—did their best under discouraging pressures. Not all of the tens of thousands of addresses delivered by Zionist speakers in the last forty years have been "tear-jerkers"; not all of them have been delivered at fund-raising functions. There has been some serious exposition on a level worthy of the subject. But even when the occasion permitted such luxury, there has been far too much of the wailing note.

It is true that we did not have enough speakers of intelligence and ability to go round; but we did not use properly those we had, and, what is therefore natural, we made no effort to develop a new generation of speakers and teachers of Jewish renaissance. We founded no Zionist seminaries, we supported no superior publications, nurtured no writers by providing them with an outlet, conducted no consistent campaign of popular education. We had not, in this country, the equivalent of Ahad Ha'am's famous society of the Bnai Moshe. And so till this day action for Israel is afflicted with the old curse of alms-gathering. And the power of bad habit was marvelously illustrated during the three- or four-year period 1946-49, when American Jewry was in a fever of excitement over Israel's destiny. During that period American Jewry was a captive audience. Moreover, it had been touched to a rare sensitivity. It was begging to be allowed to donate money, and it would have listened with gratitude to the kind of addresses which should have accompanied the extraordinary situation. In short, it was as ready to take as to give, to be redeemed as to redeem. What it got was largely the familiar combination of stunt and lamentation, alternating now with a complementary mob appeal: Jewish jingoism, mass rancor which, in revulsion from the horror of the Hitler massacres, found unworthy vent in admiration of the Palestinian terrorists. The opportunity was muffed.

Again it was not simply a shortage of teachers. It was a failure in American Zionist leadership.

We fell into a second sad error. It was generally understood that a Jewish homeland, once created, would automatically re-orientate large numbers of American Jews toward the Jewish values they were

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abandoning. The sooner the homeland was created, then, the sooner would the beneficial spiritual results flow from it. We tacitly assumed that Jews settling in Palestine naturally constituted a Jewish Palestine, that is, a homeland incorporating our universal Jewishness and sensitive to historic world Judaism. The assumption was based largely on the extraordinarily high character of the men and women who actually went to Palestine, and was therefore justifiable at the time. But it was shortsighted. We were mentally lazy; of the two big tasks, cultivating the Jewish renaissance, and pushing the work in Palestine, the second was the less difficult. We also permitted ourselves another assumption: we said that merely helping to get Jews into Palestine, and settling them there, was a spiritually regenerative activity. The upshot was that we rationalized away the need for educative work.

Now there was always a Zionist minority which held that, with the creation of the Jewish homeland, Judaism throughout the rest of the world would become devoid of meaning. But it was not a powerful minority. It made no inroads on the majority doctrine that the Jewish homeland would automatically, as well as programmatically, radiate a spiritual influence on world Jewry, this being, indeed, of the essence of its existence. But the majority, of its own accord, unled by a minority, acted contrary to its own doctrine.

In its neglect of what used to be called *Gegenwartsarbeit* (working with and for the existing Jewish communities), in its self-defeating concentration on technical reconstruction (to which it was increasingly urged, we must remember, by tragic circumstances), the Zionist movement distorted, also, the interpretation of the "Exile," the Diaspora. The consequence was an astonishing contradiction of utterance. On the one hand we said that the creation of a Jewish homeland would add content and dignity to Jewish life everywhere; on the other hand, when we spoke of the *halutzim*, we would by contrast depict the life of Jews outside of Palestine as being, in its nature, irremediably debased. We did not quite mean it. We had, in fact, the picture of a realizable ideal of American Jewish life, a dignified and creative life. We spoke that way out of admiration of the *halutzim*, out of propagandist exaggeration, out of traditions carried over from past humiliations, out of a present frustration (namely, the nonexistence as yet of a Jewish homeland), out of a feeling of guilt that we had chosen the easier way, and out of irritation with our opponents, whose timidity about Jewish and Zionistic values was a debasement of both Judaism and Americanism. We carried over into our extramural utterances our intermural Yiddish self-criticism, which has always been hyperbolic.

I repeat that we did not quite mean it; but its effects on the nascent Jewish homeland were bad. We encouraged in Palestine a superior attitude toward Jews outside it which became most manifest in the young generation there. We watched without protest, we even tacitly concurred in, the growth of a spirit, especially in the schools, which reflected all of our own exaggerated negations of Jewish life outside of Palestine. This has contributed greatly to the fission of world Jewry. The youth of Israel has been poisoned against Judaism outside of Israel. Its contempt for Jews who will not come to Israel, its rejection of a possible Judaism anywhere but within the confines of the country, is one of the failures of the Zionist movement.

But, as a Yiddish proverb says: "What your wisdom won't do, time will." What Zionism failed to do programmatically for American Jewry now seems to be taking place quite spontaneously. In part, to be sure, because of the Zionist movement itself, but the more slowly because without programmatic help.

The American-born Jewish youth I met here on my arrival forty years ago were impatient with Judaism, with tradition, with everything reminiscent of the Old World. It is often said that the general drift toward

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assimilation characterizing that period resulted from the early economic struggle. Parents had no time or strength left for the Jewish education of children. This is part of the truth; more important was the inability of the parents—an inability which lay in the nature of things, and for which there was no cure—to show the children the synthesis of Judaism and Americanism.

There was, in any case, the natural struggle of the generations; and its terrain had to be Judaism itself because here the struggle acquired its sharpest significance. Even when no tension existed, where family harmony prevailed—and it often did—Judaism was instinctively equated by the children with foreignness. It did not belong. Quite apart from anti-Semitism, the young generation felt it was a sort of imposition, or let us say an incongruity, to bring into the open the exotic collection of beliefs, practices, and memories which were an integral part of the alienness of one's parents.

When young people spoke "to the outside" about the "inside" of the Jewishness of their parents, they put on a friendly, supplicatory smile, and invited good people to share their tolerant understanding. They liked books about Jews written in that spirit, and they created the legend of the adorable comicality of the ghetto. This is the literature of the cute and lovable little Jews whose attractiveness is concealed from an impatient world by the irrelevances of a beard and of unfamiliarity with baseball. It is a literature of evasion, of shamefacedness, of suppression. It is an attempt to smile a people out of existence, and to explain one's origins good-humoredly as trivial and irrelevant. The invitation to "understand" is a lie; it is really a plea for ignorance and forbearance.

On lovers of this literature portrayals like Fagin, or Shylock, or Isaac of York produce an especially painful impression. It is not playing the game. "Here we are," they say inwardly, "doing our best to shake off this Jewish business by a gentleman's agreement, for the common benefit of Jew and Gentile, and instead of helping us. . . ."

The foregoing applies to the majority of the younger Jewish generation twenty and thirty years ago. The "intellectual" minority had its own assimilative formula, or rather rationalism, in the narrow version of "progressivism." Moreover, in the strangest way, it was mob rationalism. And there *is* such a thing as the rationalist mob, the group which is intoxicated with the feeling of its exclusive and impregnable possession of the total truth of universal process (and progress) on the logical, or rather technical, level. I say deliberately "intoxicated," because that describes the public mood of organized rationalists. The Western intellectuals of the 20's and 30's formed a new kind of church, and its revivalist affairs, called conferences —though they used the terminology of reason—were as opaquely and impenetrably emotional as those of a Hasidic or Southern Baptist jamboree. The emotions cultivated were pride and intolerance.

Taking the two together—the unintelligent Americanism of the many, the insolent rationalism of the minority—it was hard going for Jewish and Zionist education.

But somewhat more than a decade ago I began to observe an interesting change in the attitude of the "young people"—no longer so young—whose attention I had solicited in vain fifteen and twenty years before, and a still more interesting phenomenon—you could not call it a change—in the generation which was crowding them. I had exceptional opportunities for observation. I traveled each year through almost every part of the country, and as free-lance lecturer met between sixty and ninety audiences, to whose questions I paid considerably more attention than they to my answers. Between lectures I was "entertained," and I managed quite early to establish a reputation for unsociability by choosing my company—the people from whom I could learn what was going on. Pursuing my own education while trying to contribute to theirs, I learned from the Jews of America a new application of the proverb: "What your wisdom won't do, time will."

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My audiences grew younger as I grew older, and the questions which were addressed to me after the lectures took on a different character. Apart from the usual proportion of silly ones, generally asked by exhibitionists, they fell into two classes: questions put direct, and questions the answers to which were desired for the sake of a third (and absent) party. The second class was more revealing, because it arose from discussions in the home and community. If the lecture was not on a literary subject, or purely informational, but addressed to fundamentals of Judaism, I might be asked: "Why do we need Judaism in America?" Or, "Why do we Jews have to go on being different?" Coming from older people, twenty years ago and more, the questions often meant: "How shall I answer my son or daughter?" For it was evident that the questioner was not troubled on his own account. Or it might be: "How can you be a Zionist and a 100 per cent American?" Sometimes this type of question was direct, coming at first hand; the questioners would then be of the younger generation, and they had come to my lectures not as sympathizers with Jewish causes, but as critics. All these questions can be subsumed under a class: "*Why* should I be a Jew?" The interesting change is in the incidence of a new question: "*How* can I be a Jew?" One might say that the new question is the historically reorientated form of the old one.

Queerly enough, the new question too has a secondary character, and again it is the younger generation that is behind it. But now the parents are themselves fairly young, in the late twenties and early thirties; and they are not asking for a formula with which to answer the arguments of a rebellious younger generation. They are asking, instead, how they can contrive to give their children a Jewish education.

I cannot help being deeply moved by the manifestations of this change, and I am confronted by them more and more frequently. In every part of the country there are springing up new Jewish congregations formed by a younger generation—usually in the suburbs of larger cities—which is alarmed for the spiritual future of its childen. From Long Island, in New York, to the San Fernando Valley, in California, they start away from the old attitudes of scorn, or indifference; and what adds a special pathos to their awakening is, precisely, their anxiety for the young; it is almost as if they had given up hope of a satisfactory personal reorientation, or as if they sought it only through their children.

A GENERATION or two had to pass before the change could work itself out, and it might have taken longer but for the double shock—the horror of the Hitler episode and the miracle of the Jewish state. The feeling of Americanism, of belonging, had to become tacit, implying an affirmative condition without reference to an older generation. There was no more struggle, no need to reject Judaism for purposes of self-assertion. Rejection was replaced by nostalgia.

This was not all. It began to dawn on the Americanized generation that this heritage which they had spurned was apparently a remarkable thing, held in respect by the majority of decent people. The Judaism of the older generation had, therefore, not been a picturesque and trivial incidental of their foreignness; that was only part of the form, and even there a revaluation was necessary. Judaism was, it now appeared, a component of civilization. It belonged.

More followed. When the struggle died, it left a void; the nostalgia was accompanied by a hunger. It was most definitely a religious hunger, a search for meaning outside the rationalist frame of reference, which in the course of events had suffered deflation, and outside material and social satisfactions. There was—with rare exceptions—no thought of satisfying the hunger in another than the Jewish religion. The new generation felt that Judaism alone could satisfy it.

The roles played here by Hitlerism and by the birth of the Jewish state must be seen in two settings. The first is the immediate and emotional; the second, which includes the role of Communism, is historical.

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Nazi anti-Semitism created a tremendous ferment in American Jewry. I am, however, strongly convinced that by itself it would have had only a negative and retarding effect on the Judaizing process here being described. If it had not been followed by the Jewish state, there would have remained a destructive psychological aftermath of rage, pity, humiliation, and frustration. It was the double shock which had the creative effect.

As long as the democracies were in retreat before Hitlerism, the Jews had everywhere the status of pariahs. In Germany and German-occupied territories that status was formal and legal; in the democratic countries it was psychological. Jews could not make the proper, unfrustrated moral protest against the abominations of Hitlerism because it appeared that they were "specially interested parties"; they would be—and in many cases were—accused of warmongering. They were supposed to perish quietly for the sake of world peace. They were, moreover, exposed to the attacks of the uncurbed pro-Nazi elements among the democracies. When it was at last revealed that the Jews had been only the preliminary objectives before the universal attack on the world's freedom, their status improved. But it was a consolation that came too late and meant too little. It was a tactical change; it was not born of a change of heart.

Had this remained the final picture after the victory of the democracies, something like a trauma would have resulted for the Jewish psyche. But there followed the astounding, for the world at large as for many Jews, totally unpredictable birth of the Jewish state. Now this was not primarily a political event; the political side of it is almost trivial in world terms; it was a psychological, moral, proto-religious event. It was, for an instant of insight, a vast dislocation of perspective. The Jewish people, which in the decline of the democracies had fallen to the nadir of human status, rose after the victory of the democracies to an almost unmatched eminence of accomplishment.

We can easily take the thing apart. We can show—I have in fact shown—the imperfections of the Jewish role in the accomplishment; we can show the hesitancies, reluctances, obstructions on the side of the democracies. A totalitarian power had to contribute its support, on a miscalculation. But it is our business to see the forest as well as the trees. I have no doubt that if we went into the heavenly kitchen of miracles we would be quite astonished by the confusions and cross-purposes among the multiplicity of angelic cooks. Or, to speak somewhat technically, we must not be guilty of the genetic fallacy, and equate a phenomenon *as such* with the sum of its causes. The Jewish state, with all the mistakes that went into it, with all the mistakes which we shall yet put into it and derive from it, cannot, as a historic incident, be analyzed into a triviality.

IT CAN decline into one. It can, as a continuing reality, lose touch with the inspiration of its birth. But that does not affect the miracle itself. The Americanized generations of which I am speaking were startled into a new kind of thoughtfulness. Their dawning perception of something remarkable in the Jewish heritage found here moments of confirmation. Particularly relevant was the contrast between the utter debasement of the Hitler time and the lifting up in the universally applauded emergence of the state. There was also in it something deeply folkloristic which many did not identify, namely, the ancient prophecy of apocalyptic destruction preceding redemption.

These young parents whom I now see by the thousand in my audiences were never drawn to Judaism by argument. Only the reality touched them. It seems to follow that the only effective argument was—the creation of the Jewish state. And until it was created, talk was futile.

But we shall never know whether this was the case, for no real, large-scale educational effort to spell out its meaning in its deeper Jewish terms was attempted. And today the same old dilemma faces us in another form.

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The Jews of Israel—or those of them who express views on this problem—now assert that there is only one test of Jewishness, and that is the readiness to migrate without compulsion into the Jewish state. The new insights and sensitivities which the new generations of Americanized Jews have won are declared to be meaningless unless they lead to migration into Israel. All or nothing is the cry, and no time to be lost. "Either stop pretending to be Jews, or accept the consequences and become Israelis."

It is asking for trouble to be so categorical and abrupt. The awakening American Jewish generation wants guidance, not dictation, and is offended to be told that these stirrings of the spirit are, Jewishly speaking, nothing more than silly self-deception. With all its admiration for what the Israelis have done, it just cannot jump out of its skin, that is, out of its own evolutionary setting. Its right to work out its destiny must be respected.

IN SPEAKING of the re-Judaizing generation in America I am anxious not to exaggerate. It is a minority, but I believe it to be the dynamic minority. In its relation to American Jewry as a whole it makes me think of Zionism fifty years ago in relation to the Jewish masses of Europe. But there is a considerable affirmative difference. For this pre-renaissance phenomenon in American Jewry does not look quite so forlorn, is not so at odds with all appearances of reality, as Zionism was at the turn of the century.

I know: there are vast numbers of Jews to whom the matters here discussed are perfectly meaningless. There are Jews who never see the inside of a synagogue or temple, never attend a Jewish meeting, have never contributed to a Jewish cause, not even to a simple Jewish philanthropy; Jews who, if they do any reading, will avoid Jewish books, and whose homes are devoid of a single Jewish cultural symbol. There are Jews still floundering in the psychic insecurity of a vanished epoch; there are Christian Scientist Jews and Ethical Culture Jews; there are hangovers from the Jewish Socialist anti-Zionism of a generation ago; and of course there are Jewish "intellectuals" and careerists and golf-club aspirants. Those who judge quantitatively rather than qualitatively, statistically rather than dynamically, will easily reach the conclusion I so often heard expressed in Israel: "American Judaism has no future." Reaching this conclusion they will naturally act so as to make it come true. That is, they will continue in their Jewish inactivity.

But even among "active" Jews there are discouraging elements. There are Jews who do not deny their Jewish obligation, but have no faith in a Jewish future. They mean well, but work in a defeatist spirit. They are to be found among Zionists who conduct their pro-Israel activities in such a way as to empty American Jewish participation in Israel's tasks of all spiritual content; they will appeal to the most superficial and most spectacular features of the enterprise; they will bespeak for it the kind of applause that tickles the vanity of the spectator at a football game or boxing match; and they will even be generous and self-sacrificing. They will, in fact, be extremely helpful—and yet they have to be watched. They have to be taught—and they have to be kept out of the leadership.

Admitting all this, the difference between the Jewish content of American-born Jews of today and of those of thirty and forty years ago bespeaks a profound historical change. Judging forty years ago by the attitude of American-born Jews one might plausibly have said: "Judaism will decline more or less as the use of Yiddish declines." The prophecy has been falsified. Nor have the practical pressures of Zionist work and Israel's needs everywhere crowded out the affirmation of American Judaism.

In relation to the generation of Jews here being discussed it is Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization, which had drawn the necessary conclusions and accepted the consequent responsibilities. This remarkable organization, with its three hundred thousand members, is worth an extensive study as a sociological phenomenon. It has rescued tens

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of thousands of Jewish women from the futilities and vacuities of the middle-class pattern of recent times. It has managed to combine action for Israel with programmatic concern for the educational tasks of American Jewish life; it has kept clear of the kind of mob Zionism which came to terms with terrorism in Israel, which plays up to a non-Jewish nationalist spirit, and which was easily deflected into anti-labor attitudes. Hadassah's leadership challenged the Israeli assumption of exclusive Jewishness not simply in words, but by acting on the tacit assumption that American Judaism is a force in its own right, even if today largely latent.

WE WERE brought up in Zionism on two Biblical slogans, one from the Psalms, the other from Isaiah: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning," and: "For from Zion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem." It did not occur to us that like chemical equations these were reversible statements: "If thou forget us, O Jerusalem, thy right hand will forget its cunning," and: "Into Zion shall go the law and the word of God into Jerusalem."

The error is understandable—the Jewish homeland was still waiting to be built. Today, though the homeland is not complete, the error is no longer condonable. But the two reversed statements must be taken together: if Israel's neglect of world Jewry is her loss, that is because world Jewry has something to teach her; and again I must emphasize American Jewry, world Jewry's continental center.

The notion that America will have Jewish values to teach Israel strikes many Zionists at first as a perversity, for we remember that Israel was created for the conservation of world Judaism. But this impression of perversity arises from not seeing enough of the time pattern. We mistake a moment of American Jewish history, which was an instance of *reculer pour mieux sauter*, for the whole of American Jewish history. Until twelve or fifteen years ago it looked as though Judaism in this country was in rapid dissolution. And even today, when the reaction has set in, and there is a rising will to Judaism, American Judaism has not yet found its form. Nevertheless I believe one can speak of an American Jewry contributing Jewish values to Israel. True, no one can foretell which particular lessons and encouragements will issue from the interplay between Americanism and Judaism. Only certain possibilities can be suggested.

Israel's greatest spiritual danger is that of a real break with the past while exhibiting a spurious reestablished contact with it. There will be Hebrew, there will be great respect for the Bible as the national saga, there will be everlasting references to the associations of classical places and persons; but all this, I pointed out in the preceding article, will be remote legends and sentimentality if there is no middle ground of attachment and transmission, if the grandfathers are not included as well as the ancestors. If the immense and immensely significant two thousand years' continuity of Jewish life which—reading backwards—contains Sholem Aleichem, and Volozhin and Zhitomir, and the Hasidim, and Troyes and Worms, and Spanish Jewry, and Babylonian Jewry—if this continuity ceases to exist for Israel, then her self-identification with the Prophets will be as fictitious as the contemporary Greek's self-identification with Plato. Diaspora Jewry, American Jewry, must counteract Israel's growing illusion that it stands before the world as an unmediated self-resurrection of the bimillennial past.

That reminder in itself is of great corrective value: "You will not understand yourselves, your problems, your relations to the living world, if you forget that you and we are one. We who remain the Diaspora gave birth to you. To know who you are, you must know who we are."

American Jewry will not feel Israel's temptation to suppress the middle past. We will cultivate the memory of the founding of American Jewry, and of its roots in Europe. Our tradition will cherish the manifold experience of our people and faith in the heart of the Western world; and this

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will be our contribution to the widening of Israel's horizon, and to the mitigation of her egocentricity.

So far I have spoken, with the utmost brevity, of American Jewry's Jewish role for Israel. American Jewry, and Diaspora Jewry as a whole, will also play a role as the continuous bringers to Israel of general Western values.

Years ago we used to speak hopefully of the Jewish homeland as a bridge between East and West, meaning between the Christian and the Moslem worlds, in which sense I here use the words. It was a favorite theme with Weizmann, who won over to the Zionist idea the Emir Feisal, in his day the leader of the Arab world. The theme has been drowned out in the last generation, but it will emerge again as surely as the traditional friendship between England and the Jewish people emerged after the long period of strain and bitterness engendered by the struggle round the emergence and proclamation of the Jewish state. In the meantime Israel herself is in danger of becoming Orientalized—"Levantinized" is the word often used by Israeli leaders—and of forfeiting the role she was expected to play. I have heard this fear expressed in extreme forms privately, by old-time Western Zionists with whom I have visited the settlements of Iraqi and Moroccan and Yemenite and Iranian newcomers: "We are done for. We have no future. We will be outbred and forgotten. The Eastern Jews will obliterate us in Israel." And this is one of the reasons for the demand for Western immigration. It is a justified fear, and a doubly justified demand; but even if we were sending five to ten thousand non-refugee Jews annually out of the West into Israel, the need for a powerful bond between Western Jewry and Israel, as a Westernizing and democratizing influence, would not be obviated.

The metaphor of the bridge is somewhat misleading. A bridge is something static for people to pass over. The metaphor inclines us to think of Israel as something planted there to enable East and West to reach one another. But Israel herself needs a bridge. To change metaphors, Israel is not a catalytic agent; Israel is a living organism that must keep on receiving nourishment from the West and East so that in time she may help nourish the East with Western ideas, and the West with Eastern ideas. Again, if Israel were in healthy balance today, with East and West blending in the right proportions, and if, moreover, she were sound economically, and all safe militarily, a severance of her ties with Western Jewry would be fatal to her spiritual values; would be fatal also to her Westernizing function. If Jerusalem forgets the Western Diaspora, she will neither learn nor teach; she needs to identify herself with the West through Western Jewry.

If it is hard to foretell what particular forms American Jewry will develop, it should at least be easier to see what American lessons it can help to transmit now.

Let me take as illustration an outstanding American characteristic—the love of *things*. There has perhaps never been another country with such a passion for handling, scrutinizing, manipulating, arranging, investigating, and combining physical objects. It is a healthy and cheerful preoccupation; it indicates an affection for God's creation; we are pleased with what He has given us, interested in the surroundings He has set about us, grateful for the invitation to craftsmanship.

I associate with this delight in doing the American tradition of "service," a tradition which has been abused by hypocrites, and sneered at by satirists, which nevertheless is a deep-rooted sense of responsibility toward a job. Of course this sense exists everywhere in the world. In America it has become a fresh cult.

I sat with an Israeli lamenting with him the absence, in Israel, of precisely this spirit, and he asked me for one or two American examples. Since he had never been in America I had to be graphic and detailed, and for my first example I chose a soda-jerker in a busy drugstore.

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A young man stands behind a long counter serving ice-cream sodas, coffee, hot chocolate, sandwiches, Coca-Colas, Alka-Seltzers, to a rapid succession of customers filing along the row of swivel chairs before him. In front of him to the right, on an elevated glass shelf, he has a pile of plates; to the left a pile of saucers; behind him to the right on an elevated shelf there are rows of glasses, behind him to the left several trays of silver. In front of him, below, are the ice-cream containers, each with its scoop; behind him between the shelves are the coffee urn, the milk dispenser, and the hot-water geyser. Halfway up in front are the faucets for various syrups, the shelves of sliced bread, the ranked pats of butter. The young man is in constant motion, a marvel of happy, one may say, jolly coordination. He reaches with a minimum of gesture, gracefully, effectively, sight unseen, to right and left, in front, behind, half right, half left, north-northeast, northeast by north, northeast by east, southwest by west, all the while receiving and acknowledging orders, carrying on diverse conversations. He snatches up a scoop with a choreographic flourish, deposits the ice cream in the saucer or glass, holds the glass with his right hand while he sets the faucet squirt with his left, frees his left hand to bring up a dash of syrup, a pinch of ground nuts, returns to the faucet to change the squirt to a flush, flips back the cover of the ice-cream container, closes the faucet with his left hand after a final squirt, and while he serves the customer with his right, his left manipulates the register for the check, and before the left hand is finished the right is reaching for the next order. As the piles of plates and saucers sink on right and left in front and above, he directs his snatching hands to both sides in shallower and shallower parabolas; and at the exact split second stamps a bell with his foot and sings out to a concealed fellow prestidigitator: "Hey, Charley, plates! Hey, Charley, saucers, chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, butter, bread!" And the moment the pile on the right or left, behind or in front shoots up again, the reaching hand reverts to a steeper parabola, all of it without apparent effort, a functional fulfilment, a joyous rhythm. I doubt whether anything quite like this spectacle has been produced elsewhere by any other civilization.

Now this young American, this soda-jerker, is neither a hunger-driven *Massemensch,* nor a grimly inspired Stakhanovite; nor is he a soulful Tolstoyan apostle of the dignity of labor. He is a young man taking pleasure in a job, delighting in motion-saving ingenuities, in rapport with his human surroundings. He is American democracy at work—literally, American democracy making a living. If America did not make a living in this way there would be no American democracy.

My Israeli friend was amused at the description. He had not been to America, but he understood, and agreed. He asked: "What is the young man thinking about?"

"Partly of the work itself," I said, "partly of the people he is serving. The background of thought may be about a college education, a career, a girl, a car, a television set, a garage he plans to buy. He calls these his incentives, and to some extent they are. But what carries him, what imparts dash and delight to his rhythmic operation, is the American scene, the American conquest of processes, the promise of the conquest of want."

"You can't import that kind of Americanism into this country," said my friend. "We haven't the rewards for the individual, the scope for the country. The homes, and garages, and television sets, the enormous colored weeklies with seductive four-color pictures of clothes and food and gadgets and cars—all these are part of America's high spirits. Perhaps in a very remote future a comparable standard can be reached in this country. It does not help us to broadcast such views."

He uncovered with these words the psychological bias, the feeling of superiority, which hampers Americans in their approach to others, also something of his own protective bias against America. I gave him

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another instance of American democracy at work.

"As you know," I said, "I am a lecturer by profession. I travel thirty or forty thousand miles within the country every year, by train and plane and car. With more than an average share of absentmindedness, I leave on trains and planes and in hotels more than my share of books, documents, briefcases, and articles of attire. I have learned to take for granted the return of these articles; I cannot remember offhand a single disappointment. I take it for granted that train conductors, plane stewardesses, hotel housekeepers, and hotel managers should be concerned with restoring my property to me. They telephone; they wire ahead; they pack and post. It is to them a matter of professional self-fulfilment. They are frustrated if they fail. And it is all done tacitly, with good humor, patience, and persistence. Reward does not figure in it. Democracy, undefined, does."

My friend found this illustration more to his liking. "You of America," he said, "can't teach us Judaism yet. If meanwhile you could teach us something of this respect for the job you will be doing a great thing. We know about it in theory. The Hasidic and other mystics have taught us that the honest devotion of the shoemaker to his last and of the carpenter to his plane is an acceptable form of worship. Unfortunately this truth is now known only to students of mysticism who don't make shoes or chairs."

THERE are two ways of bringing American democratic productivity into Israel; by training young Israelis here, by sending Americans into Israel. A little of the first is being done, almost nothing of the second. The fault lies on both sides, but more heavily on the American.

The common error has already been indicated—the fact that it was taken for granted that American Jewry as a Jewry had nothing to teach Palestine Jewry, and never would have. It could provide human material, money, and political influence; but insofar as it remained itself it had no spiritual value for Palestine and Israel.

A community which is given this negative spiritual evaluation, and accepts it, is discouraged in all its other functions. Its morale fails. Pure economic self-interest will bring few Jews from America. Not that there is such a thing as pure economic self-interest; even our selfishness is impure. The failure to infuse into American Zionism the conviction of American Jewry's spiritual future, hence of its spiritual role in the future of Israel, chills the initiative of the community as a whole. In this atmosphere individuals find no promptings. The attitude toward Israel remains one of philanthropy —and collections are falling off; the bonds of the Israeli government meet with psychological rather than prudential resistance; the call to pioneers and to men of affairs, so much needed by Israel, finds no backing in a communal warmth. In part, this is due to American Jewry's undeveloped Judaism; but that development itself is delayed by discouragement on the part of Israel; and there would be something more of a response even today if men of affairs did not feel that they were wanted simply as donors.

The fault lies more with American Jewry because, although it is fond of speaking of Israel as an outpost of democracy, it does not accept the implications for itself. American Jewry, with its specific form of Judaism still to find, is the largest Jewish body ever to have lived in a democratic setting. Its spiritual role in Israel's life should be much greater than it is; and its acquiescense in a low spiritual evaluation vis-à-vis Israel results from a mixture of timidity and shortsightedness. American Jewry is the leader of democracy in world Jewry exactly as America is the leader of democracy in the world at large; and like America as a whole, American Jewry does not yet know how to handle the leadership.

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THE BIBLE AND A LIBERAL EDUCATION

Its Benefits, as Seen by an Unbeliever

SPENCER BROWN

JOSEPH PULITZER, the story goes, once wrote a beautiful editorial on Christmas. A rival editor published this reply: "Shut up, Hungry Joe. Christmas is not for the likes of you."

How can an unbelieving English teacher, venturing to say his say on the Bible, hope to escape, from both Christians and Jews, a like denial of *their* book to the likes of him? But it is my book as well as theirs. Indeed, in not insignificant ways, it is my book more than theirs. To justify this statement, I should first like to examine what the Bible is and what it is not. By the Bible, I mean here the book in the version best known to most of us, the English Bible in the King James translation.

The English Bible, is, of course, not the book of the Jews. The Old Testament is the book of the Jews—not a book, but *the* book. It is their Thucydides and Shakespeare and Michelangelo, their Plato and Goya and Mozart, clumsily and uneasily added together but not combined—the comprehensive heritage of this most narrowly but most deeply gifted people. But the New Testament, produced by the collision of the life and teachings of an inspired and eccentric Jewish prophet with Hellenistic philosophy and religion—the fusion of parochial and universal—the New Testament is not the book of the Jews.

The English Bible is not the book of the Catholics. By the accident of history they repudiate it as a translation; and if it were acceptable as a translation, it would still be unacceptable without the imposition of the Roman order of the Church upon the Jewish intensity and Greek subtlety of the book.

The English Bible is not even the book of the Church of England that created it. For the practices and traditions of the Church of England are wider and older than its Bible. Upon a Catholic foundation it has erected its own monument of Roman prose cadences and semi-Protestant theology, the Book of Common Prayer; its version of the Psalms, Coverdale's translation, is a revision of Tyndale's (the basis of the King James version) and to many ears still sounds as noble and more sinewy.

Nor is the English Bible any longer the book of the Protestants. Having for centuries accepted the King James Bible in its every phrase and every contradiction as the word of God—uneducated Protestants were often not really aware that their Bible was a translation—Protestant scholars have evolved more and more rational interpretations, and the churches have accepted more and more accurate translations, culminating in the Revised Standard Version, now authorized by the National Council of Churches.

At this point I might cry Q. E. D.: since

"THE Bible as literature" has become virtually a term of abuse among those who deplore the absence of true, "hard" religious faith in the modern world. SPENCER BROWN tries here to reassert the unbeliever's claim to the Bible as a monument of literature and moral insight which belongs to such as he quite as much as to those who see in it the word of God; and he tells why he believes that its reading in the schools should be an important part of the education of everyone. Mr. Brown is a member of the English department of the Fieldston School, has published articles and poetry in *Partisan Review*, the *New Yorker*, and various other periodicals, and is the author of a book on intercultural education, *They See for Themselves* (1945). He was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1909, and is a graduate of Harvard. Mr. Brown's article "A Code of Honor for a Mutinous Era" appeared in our June 1952 issue.

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none of these official groups owns the King James Bible, and since I claim it, it is mine. But such a claim cannot be exclusive in any case, and is flippant without further examination of the location and dimensions of the property and the encumbrances thereon.

THE Bible is not a coherent history. Compared with the all-ranging curiosity of Herodotus, the sustained tragic irony of Thucydides, or the sardonic unity of Tacitus—to name only ancient examples—it falls into the class of medieval fiction. Things happen; they often happen dramatically and magnificently; but the happenings are seldom caused. The Bible confuses and contradicts its own account of the creation; it is often childishly innocent of time and the historical sense—chronology expressed in *begats* enables the reader merely to attain the authors' cloudiness of mind. The writer of the tremendous story of Saul and the Witch of Endor and the spirit of Samuel is a devout monotheist; yet he ironically manifests complete trust not only in the wickedness of magic but in its efficacy. And the collectors and transcribers of the Bible make attributions of authorship that almost surpass belief: Psalm 110 ("The Lord said unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand") is assigned to David, though anybody could tell it was written by a servant *about* his master. The Epistle to the Hebrews is supposed to be by Paul; internal evidence would suggest even Francis Bacon as almost as likely.

As a guide to the bedeviled, the Bible raised puzzles for every solution. Those of little faith will be troubled rather than comforted by God's conduct toward Onan; by Paul's remarks on marriage ("It is better to marry than to burn"); by the question "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" The barbarous revenge of Simeon and Levi upon Shechem, denounced by Jacob as bad public relations, seems to incur no heavenly censure even though the Lord's rite of circumcision is used as a murderous stratagem. The Lord's answer to Job out of the whirlwind is no answer at all, as earnest moralists as diverse as Melville and Bertrand Russell have pointed out: "The divine power and knowledge are paraded, but of the divine goodness there is no hint." "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" is a shrewd riposte to a sharp question rather than a viable principle of conduct in a difficult world. Shall we submit to the powers that be, Caesar or Haman? Or shall we cultivate such otherworldliness as to isolate ourselves from all practical men of limited sanctity?

The Bible might stand as a sort of theological constitution if there were only a Supreme Court to interpret it. In these matters, however, every man is his own chief justice. On a moot point like that of life after death and the resurrection of the body, the testimony of the Book of Daniel—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt"—is one of the few Old Testament passages to set against the prevailing impression, especially strong in Ecclesiastes and some of the Psalms, that Old Testament authors believed death to be total extinction. Christian interpretations must either ignore this view or trace the development of a belief historically and make a sharp distinction between Old and New Testaments: it is disconcerting to have the holy book more or less explicitly deny a central tenet. Christians and their churches have disagreed for centuries, sometimes with bloodshed, over the nature of Christ or the meaning of the words, "This is my body." Support for almost any conceivable view of these vexed questions can be found in the Bible; Greek logic or Roman authority may decide them, but if one rejects the decision and consults the Bible instead, one is at liberty to find an answer neither Greek nor Roman but logical and authoritative enough to suit one's own wishes.

IT IS far easier, however, to say what the Bible is not than to say what it is. It is easier to name its inconsistencies and limitations (any careful reader could make up as significant and extensive a list as mine)

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than to analyze its power. For this miscellany of fact and pious fiction, of impossibly complex laws and miraculously simple truths, of a tedium of primitive incoherence and a poetry as mysterious, sudden, and brilliant as lightning, has moved men's hearts and minds to suffer and inflict torture, to destroy and preserve civilizations, to build triumphant temples and endure exile and death. And it has bound their ears and tongues in a strong enchantment, diminished but not broken after twenty-five centuries, sometimes greater than but never wholly separate from its moral force.

By moral force I do not mean laws or theology or ritual. These exact sciences impinge on morals and allegedly measure them; they are a kind of celestial sociology that reduces disorderly human actions and emotions to orderly charts and figures. Nor do I mean that the Bible is to be read as children were taught to read Aesop's Fables, with one story equal to one moral, the moral being equally useful at all times and in all places. From this kind of reading eventually arises another science, casuistry, which enables us to counterpoise "Look before you leap" with "He who hesitates is lost," according to our self-interest of the moment.

The moral content that we seek and find in the Bible is that which we find in all good literature—what Matthew Arnold found preeminently in poetry and 20th-century critics find preeminently in novels. Most of us are mildly surprised when we first discover that Arnold saw a moral idea in Keats's words to the youth carved on the Grecian Urn: "Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair." We soon accept, however, the principle that literature is good in proportion as it comments on or illuminates life. David Daiches says the same thing when he asserts that every poem is a poem on human destiny.

In short, the Bible is a moral book in the sense that all literature is moral; it instructs as all literature instructs; it is different from other books in excellence and size rather than in kind. Its claim to absolute truth has never been allowed by the vast majority of men; today even in countries of the Judeo-Christian tradition many readers find in it neither guidance beyond the simplest and most universal of precepts nor that absolute truth which mutually disagreeing groups first assume to exist and to be knowable and then assume to be revealed in the Bible. Yet if Robert Frost's saying, "A poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom," can be applied to the Bible as a great poem for all its acreage of prose, then we can draw from our delight in it a moral wisdom not of Solomon only but for all mankind.

Seen in this light, all the defects of the Bible become almost virtues, like the foibles of an honored friend. I would not expunge a single *begat* from its interminable procreation, any more than I would mothball a single ship of Homer's dreary fleet. Not one jot or one tittle of the law shall pass away because of me, not even the commandment not to mar the corners of my beard or the elaborate prescriptions for treating the leper and his clean or unclean garments, any more than I should wish to throw out *Love's Labor's Lost* or rob *Hamlet* of such exquisitely bad lines as

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears.

Take away Shakespeare's faults, and the less Shakespeare he. Select only the perfect passages for the modern Bible, and it is that much less the record of a wonderful and pious and backsliding and heroic and fickle people and their violent, capricious God who grows into holiness and majesty.

For the Bible to the non-religious is more than history and anthropology embellished with legend and miracle, more even than a Jewish counterpart to the sagas. In it are scattered with the profusion of collective genius a multitude of stories no less profound for touching only a plot of earth too small to delay an Alexander or a Caesar. Regardless of their historical truth, they bring us the same delight and moral wisdom as all great fiction or great myth.

This effect I am sure I cannot analyze,

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but I shall try to suggest it by adducing a few familiar examples from other literature: the scene in Homer where Priam kisses the hands of Achilles, "terrible man-slaying hands that had slain so many of Priam's sons"; or the mourning of the slaves for the death of Patroclus, "The women groaned, using the pretext of Patroclus to bewail their own torments." A somewhat different touch appears in the lines where Odysseus is told how he can ultimately appease the wrathful sea-god: he must travel inland with an oar over his shoulder until some countryman asks him what he is doing with that stout flail; there shall he set up the oar as a memorial and make sacrifice to Poseidon.

We feel the same effect in *The Idiot* when Nastasya Filippovna wounds Ganya's pride by throwing a hundred thousand rubles into the fire and telling him they are his if he will pluck them out with his bare hand; or in the incredible but incredibly convincing tale of Julien Sorel's head in *The Red and the Black*; or in Iago's promise as he is led off to torture,

Demand me nothing: what you know, you know;
From this time forth I never will speak word—

and we know he never will.

History is blunted by being true but can sometimes rise to the same sharp vision: the epitaph of the Spartans at Thermopylae, "Traveler, tell the Lacedemonians that we lie here, obedient to their word"; the speeches of Pericles and Lincoln; Churchill's "Never in the history of human conflict have so many owed so much to so few"; the siege of Syracuse in Thucydides.

In all these passages, and in a hundred others that the reader may choose for himself, there seem to me to be some common elements: a feeling of elevation and of overarching pity; a sense of remote or unplumbed mystery and yet of immediacy and instinctive rightness; and above all a suggestion of the littleness and at the same time of the dignity of man—which many writers make almost too explicit, as in Pope's "The glory, jest, and riddle of the world," or Pascal's "Glory and trash of the universe."

PAGE after page of the Bible shows these qualities, often in their finest form. For example:

> Then said Judith unto them, Hear me, and I will do a thing, which shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation.
> Ye shall stand this night in the gate, and I will go forth with my waitingwoman: and within the days that ye have promised to deliver the city to our enemies the Lord will visit Israel by my hand.
> But enquire not ye of mine act: for I will not declare it unto you, till the things be finished that I do.

After they agree, she begins the majestic and appalling prayer,

> O Lord God of my father Simeon, to whom thou gavest a sword to take vengeance of the strangers,

with its triumphant,

> Smite by the deceit of my lips the servant with the prince, and the prince with the servant: break down their stateliness by the hand of a woman.

The God of Simeon, we are tempted to say, of all people! But though by our standards Simeon was murderous, by Judith's he was right; there is force and aptness in the allusion, and we are carried away by strength of character and shrewdness that combine Lady Macbeth and Mata Hari in the service of the Living God. Not the least authentic touch of genius in the unknown writer, moreover, is the way in which Judith scrupulously refrains from eating and drinking heathen food and wine as she beguiles Holofernes; and it takes *two* strokes of the fauchion to sever his head.*

THE Book of Judith is probably fiction, by a highly skilled and self-conscious art-

*I have no desire to pit myself against Jerome and other formidable scholars past and present; I simply appropriate the Apocrypha as a collection of books that ought to belong to the Bible. Let Jerome argue the matter against the Council of Trent.

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ist. Yet if we turn to other books, purportedly history, by artists no more skilled and self-conscious than the sculptors and glassmakers of the Cathedral of Chartres, we find in them the same qualities as in Judith even when they lack the same unity of tone and clarity of purpose. Such is the story of Saul and David, or the Gospel of Mark.

The more one reads of David, the more one is astonished by the fathomless complexity of his character: he is evasive and sometimes cowardly; he has such a talent for embellishing a tale that Gladys Schmitt's novel fairly credibly bases itself on the supposition that he invented the exploit of the lion and the bear and that Goliath was slain by somebody else; he is sly and murderous in pursuing his selfish aims, but he will not stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, his mortal enemy Saul; his religion he expresses in the loftiest poetry, but it is severely practical—after his child is dead, there is no use in further prayer and repentance. David is a great king; but he backs into the throne, as it were, and most of his reign is a turmoil of nearly successful rebellion. He is in love with his political opponents and enraged at those who save him by slaying them—in complete contrast to his son Solomon, who acts decisively and ruthlessly to establish his own kingdom.

In the tale as a whole there is no direct moral teaching acceptable to a sophisticated reader; the ways of the Lord to David are sometimes inscrutable, not through depth, but through caprice. There is not even moral teaching in reverse—"See my neck and save your own"—or in partial reverse—"Do what I say, not what I do." But there is the highest kind of moral wisdom for the sophisticated or the unsophisticated in this extended view of a surpassingly real man with great virtues, passions, and shortcomings, as he acts and speaks significantly and profoundly.

ALL the while through this marvelous story —it is marvelous even in a flat translation or in a prolix modern retelling—there runs the incomparable style of the King James translators. It is a simple language "understood of the people" of its time and easily understood today, capable of rising to any height demanded by its subject. It moves with ease from the vivifying commonplace to dignity and majesty, and it is all one:

> And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.
>
> And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he essayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said to Saul, I cannot go with these: for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.
>
> And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.
>
> And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.
>
> And when the Philistine looked about him, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.
>
> And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.
>
> And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.
>
> Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.
>
> This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.
>
> And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

This cannot be matched in the sustained grand style of Milton, who can soar but not walk. Nor can it be rivaled in the great tragedies of Greece and France, for they also move too stiffly; nor in Melville, for when he descends to the simple, his irony often cumbers him. Only in Homer and

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Shakespeare can we find the same extended and natural magnificence.

In the Gospel of Mark, the most literal and direct of the four Gospels, this style is put to its severest test. The problem seen by Mark, no doubt unconsciously, was to make plausible the doings and sayings of a prophet whom he believed to be both God and man. The Gospel is an incomplete document, not so maimed at the end as that of Luke, but incomprehensible in places without the support of the other Gospels. Its structure, however, has a crude mastery. And though without John's theology, Matthew's learning, or Luke's wealth of parable and poetry, Mark's Gospel is unrivaled in homely vividness and in displaying the power of his idea. The following passage, for example, reaches one of the most stunning climaxes of all literature in two miracles—reading the hostile mind and healing the incurable—which Mark regards as part of the single miracle of Jesus:

And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?

And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

So far I have not attempted to deal with any of the more celebrated purple passages of the King James Bible. I have not yet done so because I make a distinction, convenient if not very valid, between lines and scenes that are great literature in their deep moral content and those that are great chiefly in verbal felicity. I give myself the luxury of suggesting a few of the latter from English poetry: Shakespeare's

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
That thou owed'st yesterday;

or Milton's

A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses;

or Coleridge's

The moving moon went up the sky
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—
Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmèd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

The laurels are not all cut down; the woods are full of them, and everyone is free to gather his own.

In the poetry of the English Bible, verbal felicity is incomparable both in intensity and extent: "Here is God's plenty." If I dwell on it too much, I console myself that it is better for people to read it in a magazine than not to read it all. Not being allowed

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to quote two-thirds of the Psalms, I quote two:

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained:

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou has put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! (Psalm 8.)

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

For there they that carried us captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones. (Psalm 137.)

There is not much to be done with these masterpieces except to memorize them. We can perhaps marvel at the supple rhythm of "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained." The majesty of the balanced phrases rises to "What is man?" (glory and trash of the universe) and falls away in cadence. The sorrow of all exile is in Psalm 137—an elegy for this century also. But the poet is a man, and a primitive man: he gloats in anticipation of horrific revenge. Yet this poetry eludes analysis. If some of its power is adventitious, through familiarity, nevertheless on re-reading it we are struck again by its perennial vigor.

The poetry is not limited to the Psalms. Nearly every book of the Bible rises to such heights, sometimes quite unexpectedly. In the midst of the common sense of Ecclesiasticus we come on the wonderful apostrophe to death—"There is no inquisition in the grave"—or the chapter on the beauty of sky and season:

He made the moon also to serve in her season for a declaration of times, and a sign of the world.

From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection.

The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven;

The beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord.

At the commandment of the Holy One they will stand in their order, and never faint in their watches.

And just where we might expect the apostle Paul to be most arid, in his repetitive and wire-drawn pronouncements on the resurrection and nature of the "glorified body," we hear the trumpet of the last judgment and a hymn of sober but exalted triumph:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on

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immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

TO MANY readers all these quotations and comments will have been obvious; to others less familiar with the Bible, they will remain unconvincing. Still others may legitimately ask whether the difficulties that the English Bible presents to the modern reader might not be removed and its merits preserved and made accessible through a better translation. This question has been raised (and, let us hope, answered for our time) by the appearance of the Revised Standard Version, which achieved the top of the best-seller lists.

The King James translators, it is true, did not have the benefit of modern historical criticism and knowledge of ancient manuscripts; their work is based on inferior texts and is, in the light of fuller information, inaccurate in many places. Furthermore, though it was intended to be understood of the people, the language of the people has changed, and some words and phrases clear to everybody in 1611 are now obscure to all who do not take the trouble to get used to them. Hence a score of modern translations have been made, all closer to the correct Greek and Hebrew texts, but unfortunately all, by their colloquial nature, lacking the dignity and rhythm of their great predecessor.

The Revised Standard Version, like 19th-century revisions, attempts to "preserve all that is best in the English Bible" and at the same time to add accuracy, consistency, and ease of reading. That it does neither is not to our present point. It is a valiant effort that should never have been made, since the modern reader who wishes to find out what the Bible actually says should, if he has the linguistic equipment, consult the original texts; if he has not, he should read a modern colloquial version with the help of scholarly commentaries. But the Revised Standard Version is a remarkable if unintentional guide to the excellences of the King James translation.

The RSV translators explain in their preface that, since the second person singular is obsolete, they are abandoning it; yet they keep it to address the Deity in the Psalms, and in prayers elsewhere, so that the unlucky reader must still understand verbs ending in *-est*. Dozens of words, also, that have passed from the language or changed in meaning have been eliminated—but not consistently so. *Nigh* appears vestigially in some Psalms, though it has been excised elsewhere. The King James euphemism for sexual intercourse "went in unto" becomes "went in to," and "knew" is kept unchanged, probably to the continued bafflement of younger readers; Samson continues to smite the Philistines "hip and thigh"; Saul breathes out "threats and murder" instead of "threatenings and slaughter"—and the hendiadys is still not clear, though no longer familiar. A few phrases have succumbed to modern scholarship and disappeared forever: "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," and "Sleep on now and take your rest." Man's "long home" becomes his "eternal home"; "Behold, this dreamer cometh" is "Here comes this dreamer" (the whole Joseph story, incidentally, is pretty roughly treated); "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" is now "Worship the Lord in holy array"; the vivid "Gallio cared for none of those things" is flattened out to "Gallio paid no attention to this."

LET us look at a more extended passage; the story can hardly help remaining impressive in the RSV, but virtue has gone out of it.

In the King James version:

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at

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the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength.

And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

Now, in Revised Standard Version:

Now Peter and John were going to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful to ask alms of those who entered the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, with John, and said, "Look at us." And he fixed his attention upon them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

Nothing, it seems to me, could make clearer the unassuming splendor of the King James version and its almost infallible grasp of dramatic and rhetorical climax—"Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee." For the scholar, for the religious disputant, modern re-wordings and accurate commentaries are essential, just as they are for a full understanding of Shakespeare; a revised standard retranslation retaining many peculiarities of the seventeenth-century text without its power is unnecessary. Shakespeare presents considerable difficulties, to be sure, but nobody wants this sort of thing:

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether it's nobler in the mind to endure
The missiles of hostile fortune,
Or to mobilize against innumerable troubles,
And by opposing, to end them. . . . To die,
to sleep;
To sleep, perhaps to dream: yes, there's the
difficulty.

Is the analogy with Shakespeare unfair? Perhaps it is; the retranslators of the Bible would not concede that a knowledge of Shakespeare is necessary to salvation. But from my point of view the two are different in manner and degree, not in kind. Both are filled with moral wisdom and verbal felicity; to destroy the latter must impair the delight by which we attain the former. Perhaps it is pedantic to carp at the gross faults of the Revised Standard Version; perhaps, instead, we may vaguely hope that it will draw all men back to the great monument of Elizabethan and Jacobean English—supplest, most expressive, and least disciplined of tongues, disciplined here for once by awe of the Holy Word, as it was disciplined at about the same time by Shakespeare's dramatic and poetic technique.

Thus far, among other things, I hope that as an English teacher, even though an unbeliever, I have made good my claim to the Bible. The English teacher is preoccupied with verbal felicity and is also a teacher of morals. He studies and teaches whatever our culture has to say about life, whatever is distinct from scientific measurement. He appropriates not only original documents but whatever translations are not too offensive to the ear. He studies and teaches the value that Sophocles and Euripides put on the individual man. He weighs in his non-numerical scales the wickedness of Edmund and Goneril, the fierce one-legged mind of Ahab, the irresolute treachery of Nostromo, the loneliness of Hanno Buddenbrook, the rage of Dmitri Karamazov. He alone in modern life—an awesome responsibility for which he is ill-equipped—takes all literature to be his province. And

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since one of the finest treasuries of our culture is the Bible, the Bible belongs to the English teacher.

At this point I feel like Pilgrim emerging from the lush green Valley of Platitude into the harsh Upland of Sniping, where lurk the Slings and Arrows. I have no desire here to enter the controversy over the separation of church and state in the schools—though I have strong opinions on the subject. Faced with the demonstrable failure of church and home to make religion attractive, the sects have chivvied the public school to let them in or itself to give religious instruction. Their pressure has been crude, emotional, sometimes disingenuous. Respected religious leaders have used shoddy stratagems to sanction a snatch of prayer in the classroom, or even, as in New York State, to persuade children to repeat an allegation of their dependence on God, in phrases theologically pregnant but to a child merely tumid. It seems characteristic of waning faiths throughout history thus to excite amused retrospective pity. (But surely the time for *that retrospection is not yet come.*)

On the other hand I know that if our culture is to be preserved and transmitted at its best, it must include the Bible. Church and home failing, the school must undertake the job and hand it over to the English teacher. In other words, I wish to clarify by complication the problem of separating schools and sects, for I have often been uneasy as I listened to arguments for such separation; even as I agreed, they seemed to me a revised standard version of what I believed.

In short, the Bible should be taught. It must not, for reasons not all dependent on my particular philosophy, be taught as theology; it must be taught, by the English teacher, as great fiction, history, myth, and poetry—a process that, if successful, will not make any sect much happier, though this should not be too strongly urged as an argument. If anyone objects that few, if any, English teachers are fitted for so delicate and dangerous a task—walking the narrow bridge between theological commitment and scoffing irreverence, and not alone but accompanied by perhaps bovine students, like the man in Irish legend who was punished for stealing a cow by having to lead it across a mile-long razor-blade over a mile-deep gulf of flames—I can only reply that so are few people fitted to teach Shakespeare.

When Thomas Huxley was busy mining the foundations of the classical education he had enjoyed and used so well, his enemies compared him to a man who, having inherited great wealth, went about preaching that others should scorn money. If this was true of Huxley, it should not be true of us. We should wish our children to inherit our wealth, but without the entail of guilt and theological bitterness and scientific absurdity that so many of us were forced to accept with the wealth. That such a desideratum presents problems it would be foolish to deny: all good teaching is difficult.

The Bible will repay, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, any degree of intellectual and literary understanding we can lend to it. Our children, left alone, are unlikely to read the Book of Books concealed inside a comic, or, like latter-day Abe Lincolns, by the flickering light of the TV set; and if they do, they will need our help in the reading. The Bible belongs to all of us, and we should allow neither the greed of the sects for converts nor the justifiable apprehension of the secularists to deprive us and our children of its delight and wisdom.

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DO WE LEAVE THE RUSSIAN JEWS TO THEIR FATE?

They Face Extinction, Unless —

JULIUS MARGOLIN

"ALL of Israel are responsible for one another." So the ancient rabbis taught. Do we need to say any more than this to account for the anxiety that world Jewry feels for the two and a half million Jews behind the Iron Curtain, the largest part of whom are some 1,800,000 Russian Jews? This two and a half million is the remnant of the eight or nine million that lived in Eastern Europe before the Hitler extermination. And each of these Jews is precious to us because he represents a *type*—a particularly creative type of European Jew which it took centuries to evolve, and which initiated and sustained the most important developments in Jewish life of the past fifty years. It was the spring that fed both the flood of emigration to America and Zionism—the two basic movements of 20th-century Jewish history. Now this Jewish type—and indeed Judaism itself, in any and every genuine form—is threatened with extinction under Soviet rule.

For thirty years we did not know, or misunderstood, or were systematically deluded about what was happening to the Jews inside Soviet Russia. Thanks to the Prague trial and the misfired Moscow "doctors' plot" we are perhaps no longer quite so simple-minded. Make no mistake about it: *the Jewish people is facing death in the Soviet Union.* Incessant persecution has so shattered and dispersed them that they stand on the verge of extinction.

Let us recall a few fundamental facts. The six million Jews of czarist Russia formed an entity, with centers in Warsaw, Riga, Vilna, Kiev, and Odessa. The revolution broke this entity up into several parts, thus laying the basis for the systematic destruction of Jewish life. The Jews of Kovno were cut off from those of Vilna; Warsaw's Jews lost all touch with the Jews of Minsk and Odessa. The Kerensky revolution had given equal rights to the Jews. But the Bolshevik revolution deprived Jew and non-Jew of the right of self-determination and democratic development. The other nations of the Soviet Union, living as they did in compact masses on their own territories, were able to continue, to a considerable degree, as nationalities in spite of this. But the dispersed Jewish minority sensed their loss of freedom for expressing their distinctiveness as the beginning of the end. Their numbers fell off to a half of what they had been in pre-revolutionary days, while the area of their dispersion increased.

New Jewish centers arose in Moscow (where no less than half a million now live) and Leningrad, the Urals, Siberia, and Central Asia. But these Jewish settlements are permitted neither Jewish schools nor

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MORE than 2,000,000 Jews live behind the Iron Curtain; of these some 1,800,000 are Russian Jews. Of late, the world has become aware that in addition to the "normal" regimentation and oppression that the Soviet regime visits on the life and culture of all minorities the Jewish group has been the victim of a special campaign of persecution, elimination from official posts, and deportation to slave labor camps. JULIUS MARGOLIN, who witnessed at first hand the sufferings of his fellow Jews under both Nazi and Soviet persecution, sees the Jews behind the Iron Curtain menaced by an extinction as total as that visited upon them by the Nazis, and he pleads with world Jewry to arouse itself to action before it is too late, suggesting some measures that should be immediately undertaken. Mr. Margolin now lives in Tel Aviv and is the author of a book on his five years in Soviet concentration camps. This article is based on his *Three Lectures on Communism,* published (in Hebrew) in Tel Aviv a year ago.

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Jewish newspapers, neither a national language nor Jewish religion or culture in any traditional sense. Communism, that is to say, placed the Jews in a situation which would inevitably lead to their assimilation and disappearance without a trace in the sea of Soviet peoples.

This assimilation was in no sense voluntary or "natural." As a first step, the Communist dictatorship closed down Jewish institutions and independent schools, abolished all Jewish parties, and systematically got rid of every Jewish public figure who opposed the Communist line on the "Jewish question." It took more than a decade for the underground Zionist organizations to be suppressed. Every stage of this repression of Jewish life was accompanied by arrests, imprisonments, exile, expulsions, suicides.

For the most part the world is unaware of Russian Jewry's tragedy. The incessant persecutions, and especially the physical exterminations that accompanied the consolidation of the dictatorship, are known to the the outside world only in the most meager and fragmentary way. We know no more about the Jewish victims of the Soviet concentration camps than we would have known about those of the Nazi camps had Hitler won the war. We do know, however—I myself from personal experience during the years 1940-45—that the Soviet concentration camps number in the thousands, and that in all these camps Jews have died and are dying today: Zionists, Jewish socialists, "suspect" Jews, Jews whose only fault consists in their not having served with sufficient ardor the regime that destroys their people. In the past decades, some hundreds of thousands of Jews must have passed through these camps, prisons, and "isolators," or into exile; and I estimate that about 200,000 Russian Jews are today buried alive in the Russian forced-labor camps. This must remain an estimate—we cannot expect a regime that conceals the total number of inmates of its forced-labor camps to provide us with a "Jewish census." So thorough an expunging of Jewish life could not have been carried out by the Soviet regime without the assistance of collaborators from among the Jews themselves. This is, unhappily, no novelty in Jewish history. The Inquisition employed recent converts from Judaism in its work of persecution. The Nazis created a privileged Jewish constabulary to assist them, their reward being that they were exterminated last. Their record of shameful collaboration with the forces of evil is fully matched by the Jewish Communists.

Communism destroys Judaism by slow attrition, not by outright extermination. In the first years of the Soviet regime, Jewish sections ("Yevsektzia") of the Communist party were set up to establish the Communist hold over Russian Jewry. While conducting a veritable war against any authentic Jewish national culture, the Yevsektzia demagogically supported Yiddish and Yiddish culture (in "form" only!—the "content" had to be "socialist," to quote a famous dictum of Stalin's), but only in order to destroy Hebrew. In fact a Jew could avoid persecution only if he renounced his history, culture, religion, and all intercourse with world Jewry—everything that makes a Jew a Jew.

In due time the Yevsektzia, having exhausted its usefulness, was "liquidated" in its turn. It had created a simulacrum of Jewish life that was a fraud from beginning to end. Now even that imposture was cast aside. The Moscow Yiddish publishing house "Emes" was shut down. The writers Babel, Kulbak, Bergelson, Markish, Harik, Eric, and others disappeared from the stage. The Communist-dominated Yiddish schools were disbanded (the Russian Jews had refused to send their children to them). Only the Zaslavskys and Ehrenburgs remained astride the ruins of Russian Jewish life—Jews who are more alien to the Jewish people than its worst enemies.

Biro-Bidjan proved as much a fraud as the Yevsektzia. As Soviet Yiddish culture was a pseudo-culture, so Biro-Bidjan was a pseudo-national territory; it ran a speedy course to ruin and nothing whatsoever is heard of it today.

What has remained of the Russian Jewish

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people? A mass of isolated individuals who do not know the truth about themselves or their people, or even about their persecutors. What do they know of world Jewry? Only what Stalin has said: that it does not exist. Of the United States and Israel? Only the lies they find in *Pravda*. Of Zionism? Only what Zaslavsky and Ehrenburg tell them. Of the Bible? The overwhelming majority never even saw one.

Behind the merciless destruction of the Jewish people in the Soviet Union lies not an explicit hatred, but disdain for its interests, a denial of its right to self-determination, and a complete indifference to its fate. The Soviet dictators abused the simplicity of the ordinary Russian Jews and exploited the talents and revolutionary ardor of the Jewish intelligentsia, without feeling the slightest sense of obligation toward them. During the partition of Poland in 1939, half of Polish Jewry was thrown to Hitler for destruction, while a special agreement protected the Bielo-Russians and Ukrainians. In 1940 hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from Nazism, instead of being offered help and a haven, were rounded up and sent off to suffering and death in the labor camps. To this day Jews rot in the forests of Siberia and in the icy wastes of the Arctic, in the Ural mines and in the farthest corners of the country, without even daring to call on us for help.

WE ARE told still that the people responsible for these sufferings are "not anti-Semites," and that we should appreciate the fact that they have not persecuted Jews with the savagery of the Nazis. There is much confusion on this score. Let me try to dispel some of it.

First of all, it is clear that the great majority of Russians are innocent of what the Communist party does to the Jews; the inhuman Soviet attitude to the Jews is simply a reflection of the fanatical policies of Communist officialdom. But in Hitler's Germany, too, the active tormentors of the Jews comprised a small minority; the majority were people who for one reason or another could not find it in them to care about what was being done to the Jews. Let us remember that indifference to the sufferings of others is at the basis of most of the world's crimes—it makes them possible, indeed it *provokes* them. In the final analysis, Communist indifference to Jewish life and dignity is merely another variety of anti-Semitism—a kind of "cold" anti-Semitism—and under the totalitarian regime of Russia this anti-Semitism always holds the threat of mass extermination. The treatment of the Jewish minority by the Soviet rulers is governed by certain "common socialist principles." If the application of these principles results in the destruction of the Jewish collectivity, so much the better; it is not worth the trouble of even being talked about. But if the victims of the process show any signs of resistance, if they give the slightest indication of refusing to go along with their extinction as a group, then they are "wreckers," "Trotskyists," "cosmopolitans"—at this point, indifference changes into venomous hatred and the "disobedient" are destroyed.

The Jewish people which Communism denies in theory, it destroys in practice. But this is not the whole crime. The further crime is that the double-talk of the Soviet dictatorship is still able to divert world Jewry —that is to say, Israel and the Jews of the United States—from extending help to a Russian Jewry fast sinking in the Soviet quicksands. Russian Jewish families are split up without any hope of communicating with one another? Jews perish in camps and exile? But they are "speculators," Zionists, class enemies, rootless cosmopolitans. At a time when open anti-Semitism is frowned upon in "progressive" circles, this kind of cynical Communist demagogy towards the Jews provides a convenient means for expressing concealed anti-Jewish attitudes. Racial anti-Semitism had at least this feature, that it excluded Jews from taking part in it. But Communism opens wide the doors to Jewish participation in their own destruction.

EVERYWHERE in the West, not excluding the United States and Israel, there is a

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terrible indifference to what is happening to the Jews behind the Iron Curtain that is only several steps removed from the brutal disregard of Soviet officialdom. Is the Jewish conscience merely dormant, or has it been anesthetized? Instead of protesting against a crime that in some respects rivals Hitler's, many Jews ask why "busybodies" are trying to stir things up and make them worse than they are. Suspicion is cast on the motives of the protesters: they are "fanatical" anti-Communists, political opportunists, etc.

This mass indifference is by and large the natural consequence of the rupturing of the bonds that used to unite Russian with world Jewry—just as world indifference to the fate of the Russian people as a whole follows upon the breaking off of Russia's communications with the West. The breaking of these ties is not the doing of the Jews of Russia or the world, but of the Communist rulers of Russia, and it bears its bitter fruit in ignorance, apathy, and indifference. In the Middle Ages, Europeans knew more about the Turks, Chinese, and Hindus than we in the West today know about the life of the Jews in Russia. I say "more," because in the Middle Ages there were at least no official lies spread about the condition of the Turks, Chinese, and Hindus like those the Soviet authorities spread about the condition of the Russian Jews.

TAKE for example the Jews living in the Siberian city of Slavgorod-Altaisk, where I passed the year of 1946 in exile. They numbered many charming Jewish girls and vital young men. What do we know of their lives? What has been their fate since I last saw them? If I say that they live under conditions of the most extreme misery and persecution, most people shrug their shoulders; either they don't believe me or, worse, my statement makes no impression on them. Because for decades we have ceased to see, hear, and feel the human presence of the Russian Jews, they have become an abstraction for us. In these circumstances, brother forgets brother and friend forgets friend.

Even if it were possible to call the truth to the attention of the Jews of the West and to convince them that the Soviet regime implacably wars on Jews *as Jews,* there are people in our midst who would oppose such a course and do all in their power to silence the outcry. Why? Because they have already written off Russian Jewry in their political calculations. But it is impossible to be for the hangman and for his victim at the same time—they have chosen the hangman. Some have gone beyond merely not knowing the truth, they do not want to know it. This is more than indifference, it is fear of the truth. The next step is hatred of those who insist on reminding them of the truth which they find it impossible to expunge from their hearts—the guilty, terrible knowledge of what is happening in the Soviet Union to their own friends and comrades.

In a sense, they choose the destruction of Russian Jewry, just like those "good" Germans who were not anti-Semites but hardened their hearts and gave their assent to Hitler because they expected him to deliver the great German victory. If one asks these Jews, "Why don't you fight against the evil that is being done to the Jews of Russia?" they answer: "We cannot fight against progress, even though it be founded on Jewish misery." Or politically, in terms of this special interest or that, it isn't "realistic."

I shall not debate with such as these. I know that a revolution that casts millions of innocent people into concentration camps is no decent revolution, that "progress" which leads to the extinction of an entire people is not progress. When Jews grow blind and deaf to the suffering of others out of an abstract faith in an abstract ideal, or because of political considerations, the vaunted humanitarianism of their thought and action is exposed as a hollow sham. If the tragedy of the Russian Jews continues to be passed over in silence, the entire Jewish people will themselves have suffered the greatest tragedy. Their inability to be aroused by the tragedy of Russian Jews will symptomize the dissolution of the ancient bond, the fellow-feeling, that has kept Jewry and Judaism alive through the centuries.

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This apathy affects the Jews of Israel no less than the Jews of the West. How often have I heard Israeli Jews say: "What happens to the Jews of the Diaspora is not really important; it is only what is happening here that counts." Now that Hitler and Stalin have done their work, and eight million Jews have lost their lives or freedom, the remnant no longer interests our super-nationalists, and all responsibility for them is shrugged off. What Stalin began in the "corrective" labor camps and Hitler continued in the gas chambers is now being sealed by this un-Jewish, un-Zionist ideology. Indeed, if this callous philosophy gains ground, it spells the end of Zionism. Zionism is a serious matter—it is not for snobs or cowards. Israel's attitude to the Russian Jews is a test of the quality of Israel's nationalism, overshadowing by far the question of the "historic boundaries" of Israel. The wholeness of Kol Israel, the people, is a much more important matter than the wholeness of Israel, the country.

There is no greater symptom of national deterioration in Israel than the League for Friendship with the Soviet Union, which counts thousands of young people among its members, and large numbers of the intellectual elite. Whose friendship do the members of this organization seek? Certainly not that of the hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Soviet concentration camps, not that of the millions of Russian Jews doomed to forced assimilation, not that of the Soviet peoples who live under the same oppression as the Russian Jews. They seek the friendship of a government that murders Zionists. Membership in such an organization is no less shameful because this open solidarity with the executioners of the Jewish people is tolerated, evokes no protest or condemnation in the broad circles of Israeli society. We must take steps to restore the moral health of the Jewish people—for nothing less is involved. Day and night, we must reiterate the simple blunt fact that those among us in Israel who approve of or connive at the violence done the Jewish people inside the Soviet Empire are our enemies no less than open anti-Semites and organizers of pogroms. And what I have said concerns the political and moral health of the Jews of the West as well.

But how will all this help the Soviet Jews? As a matter of fact, can we do anything at all for them?

As one who shared the fate of Russian Jewry for a number of years, I mean to answer this question as earnestly as I know how.

First of all, even if the most that is possible is moral support, we must not withdraw that essential moral support by abandoning the Soviet Jews to their fate. We must show them that we have not forgotten and will not forget them. The least we can do is to refrain from spreading the impression that we think they should be grateful to the Stalinist dictatorship for not murdering them *en masse*, as Hitler did, in extermination camps; it is precisely this attitude that breaks their power of resistance. Are there any people more isolated and cast away than the Zionists and Jewish socialists in the Soviet forced labor camps, who must perish feeling that their comrades have washed their hands of them, that even they don't care about their fate?

The efficacy of open protest against Soviet terror should not be underestimated; and we should make it our endeavor to counter the daily glorification of Soviet crimes, the daily flood of falsehood in the Soviet press, to protest daily, and to repeat the protests, to answer every lie. Naturally our protest will not free the inmates of the Soviet camps, nor frighten the people who shot Erlich and Alter and who keep Oren imprisoned. Nevertheless, our protests will have the effect of encouraging the Soviet Jews and stiffening their resistance against the pressures of compulsory assimilation. When Israel was proclaimed, hope revived in the hearts of the Soviet Jews. They will renounce Israel only when Israel renounces them. I would compare the situation of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain with that of a drowning man. It may not be in our power

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to pull him out of the water to safety. But our protests and concern are so many life-preservers thrown to the struggling swimmer that may enable him to maintain himself on the surface until, perhaps, help does come.

THIS brings me to our last question. What are the chances of Soviet Jewry's being saved from physical and national obliteration? What are the chances of its being liberated from Communist bondage and rejoining the worldwide Jewish community? For me and many others this is no mere abstract question or "public issue"—on the other side of the Iron Curtain there are people whom we cherish and want to see again in this life.

There are two possibilities. The first is the collapse of the Soviet Empire as the result of defeat in war. The second is an inner breakdown of the regime without war. I exclude a third possibility: that a "miracle" will happen and Communism will somehow allow Soviet Jewry to live. This is an argument typical of fellow-travelers; it is used to justify and encourage passivity. No such miracle is possible under Soviet totalitarianism; totalitarianism has a logic, and that logic is against us. After thirty years of fruitless waiting, it is time that we drew the plain conclusion that the whole history of Communism has now made explicit. Only the destruction of the Soviet Empire from without, or its internal collapse, can save Russian Jewry.

None of us can possibly want a war. It is no secret that on the other side of the Iron Curtain millions of despairing people—Poles, Czechs, and Russians—look forward to a war as offering the only opportunity to throw off the oppressive Soviet dictatorship. But are there any Jews in the West who want war? Certainly it would be a fanatical nationalist who would desire a world misfortune for the sake of saving the Jewish people. I myself have no illusions about the special sanctity or world importance of the Jews. If I once had such illusions they have long since been dissipated. Jewish blood is no more precious than other blood; if the salvation of the Russian Jews should require the shedding of the blood of millions of other people, why then their salvation must be foregone. I and people who share my attitude could not consent to such a war.

But no one is asking for our consent. What we want or do not want is no political factor in the situation. If war should nevertheless come—and every indication is that, if it does come, it will come by the decision of that same regime which threatens the existence of the Jewish people—then it ought to be clear that for Israel, and for all Western Jews, there can be no choice but to fight to the death—just as we feel we had to fight against Hitler—against the side on whose banner is written: "concentration camps; forced Sovietization; the destruction of Judaism and Jews."

We do not want war, and we do not know that a war is inevitable. What we do know is that we must without further faltering or delay launch a campaign for the preservation of Russian Jewry. The Russian Jews should haunt our minds the way God haunts the minds of Orthodox Jews; their memory should be nailed to our doorposts like a *mezuzah*. The doors of our homes should be kept open for them as the doors are kept open on the Seder night for the prophet Elijah, about whom we know that he will come without knowing when.

I HAVE in mind a number of concrete measures.

We need to compile as complete a record as possible of the Jews in the Soviet camps and places of exile.

We need to form an organization of former inmates of Soviet concentration camps, on the model of the organizations of former inmates of Nazi camps. To aid in this, and in other tasks, the government of Israel should be persuaded to grant citizenship to all Jews in the Soviet Union who are victims of political persecution.

The government of Israel should be persuaded to demand the right of emigration for the Soviet Jews, voicing this demand in the forum of the UN, in the various interna-

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tional humanitarian organizations, and directly to the Soviet government.

Every possible means, from radio broadcasts to word-of-mouth messages, must be employed to inform the Russian Jews that we have not forgotten them.

We should organize a worldwide petition to the Soviet government asking that the Jews be permitted to emigrate. Such a petition may not unbar the doors of the Soviet Union, but it will have an invaluable effect on world opinion and will hearten and sustain the Soviet Jews.

In sum, Jewish society must be roused out of its apathy and mood of defeatist acceptance of the Soviet anti-Jewish policies; and, once it is aroused, the world will not be indifferent.

Nor should we fear accusations that such a program is "hysterical anti-Communism." Anti-Communism is a legitimate means of self-defense against a system that is anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist, anti-socialist, anti-liberal, and anti-human. If any other regime in our day were to oppress the Jews as the Soviet regime does, we should have to react to it in just this fashion, and we would feel we had every right and justification to do so. And the simple fact is that since the defeat of Nazi Germany there is only one government in the world—the Soviet Union—that persecutes Jews with terror and extermination.

How is it possible to separate the persecution of the Jews in the Soviet countries from the whole picture of Communist tyranny and aggression? Had any Jew said in 1938: "I don't want to fight Nazism, that's none of my business. All I want is the repeal of the Nuremberg laws"—he would have been thought mad or worse. But in our day there are Jews who sincerely believe that it is possible to ask favors from Communist regimes and to limit oneself to mere formal protests without calling into question the political assumptions and foundations of a regime that aims at the kind of destruction of a people for which the USSR destines the Jews. Whoever is against the persecution of the Jews in the Soviet Union cannot be anything else but an anti-Communist, for that destruction is an intrinsic part of that totalitarian system; and vice versa, opponents of Communism throughout the world (so long as they are not enemies of freedom similar to the Communist themselves), cannot help being our friends and the friends of the enslaved Russian Jews.

Our special task is to arouse the Jewish public *as Jews* to an awareness of the annihilation threatening the Jews locked inside the Soviet prison house. And once Jewish public opinion is awakened, it will be possible to raise the question of the physical and cultural extermination of the Soviet Jews in the negotiations between East and West. For Jews the question of the captive Jews of the Soviet Union is the same kind of important matter as the question of the Korean prisoners. It should be clear that any concessions that we may wring from Moscow can only come as the result of organized pressure. As long as concentration camps exist in the world, under whatever regime, masked under whatever guise of "progress," the struggle against them must go on.

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"BAR MITZVAH": A STORY FROM THE SOVIET INDEX

Published in Moscow, 1948

ALEXANDER ISBAKH

ALEXANDER ISBAKH is (perhaps *was*) a Jewish fiction writer, critic, and journalist whose language is Russian, and who lives in Soviet Russia. Born Isaac Abramovich Bachrach in 1904, he rose to prominence in the Soviet literary world during the late 1920's as a *littérateur* and critic. During the 30's and the 40's many "light" short stories from his hand appeared in Russian magazines, and in 1940 he was officially honored for his reporting of the Finnish-Russian war. The story published here is taken from a collection of autobiographical tales, *Years of Life* (*Gody zhizni*), that came out in Moscow in 1948. The hostile reviews of this book which appeared early in 1949 were among the first signs of the official anti-Semitic campaign that terminated only with Stalin's death. Isbakh was denounced—with his original name, Bachrach, almost always given in parenthesis—for "literary preciosity," for his tenderness toward the Jewish religion, and for his "bourgeois nationalism" and open sympathies with Zionism. At that time Isbakh was professor of literature in the Moscow Pedagogical Institute and, as far as is known, was connected with no Soviet Jewish organization or cultural enterprise, nor had he ever written for specifically Jewish magazines. Since the spring of 1949 his name has never been mentioned in print in Russia.

That the charges against him were to some extent justified (though only a totalitarian regime would consider them criminal charges) is shown by the palpable ambiguity of his presumed hostility to Zionism and religious Judaism in the present story. Isbakh seems to criticize both in the figure of the rich "exploiter," Solomon Rosenblum, and to aim at God through the doubts of the narrator. But obviously Rosenblum's crassness and little Sender's estrangement from God compromise neither Zionism nor God. Being the good artist he is in this story, Isbakh refrains from judging anything other than human beings. The Soviet critics were particularly incensed, moreover, by his daring to quote the text of "Hatikvah," something that no Soviet Yiddish writer had ever ventured to do.

Bernard Choseed, who translated the present story and supplied the facts for this note, is a former staff member of the American Jewish Committee who now teaches Russian literature and language at the University of Michigan, where he is also completing his doctoral dissertation on "Key Jewish Topics in Soviet Russian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish Literature."—ED.

ON THE 25th of February, 1917, I was thirteen years old. On that all-important day I came of age. Such was the age-old, hallowed Jewish law. I entered the ranks of devout Jews, and from that day on had to fulfill unceasingly all the numerous and—alas!—far from easy obligations involved in serving the Almighty.

Over the preceding few years my relations with God had deteriorated considerably. I would not say that a black cat had run between us, but of a faith once passionate and austere, even mystic, hardly a trace remained.

I no longer quite believed in God, and I had stopped loving him a long time ago. Nevertheless, I still feared him. And this fear made me fulfill all the prescriptions, sit through the long holiday services in my orphan's seat in the synagogue, and honorably keep the fast on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Nobody drove me to this. The ghost of my father did not keep appearing at night, and mother herself—my good mother—absent-mindedly kept putting tasty morsels before me on the day of the fast.

But I did not tolerate lies when it came to God. Since our relations were already so formal, cold, and I might even say hostile, I could all the less afford to descend to fraud and hypocrisy.

For Venya Rosenblum things were good. In the synagogue, he sat near his father. This

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dunce, though thirteen years old, was still considered a youngster—at the Passover seder he would search for the hidden piece of matzoh and put the traditional "questions" to his father. And his complacent father, surrounded by his family, would look over the well-laden table, smack his lips, and read in the Haggada the story of how our forefathers left the land of Egypt.

As for me, I had been the head of a family since I was eight. There was nobody to hide a piece of matzoh from me, and there was nobody to explain the "questions" to me. I had to answer before God for the entire family. And I did try conscientiously, if without enthusiasm, to fulfill all my obligations to him, the Omnipresent.

But did this God exist at all? Over the past year this question had been bothering me more and more. At the *gymnaziya* [high school] an illegal [political] group had been formed. It was headed by Vanya Filkov's father, and went under a complicated and pompous name—"CFTSOSL," which meant Circle for the Study of Social Life. The activities of this group did not go beyond generalizing about czarism, delivering some opinions on the history of the French Revolution, and reading Zheleznov's political economy. Although there were only five or six of us, the mere fact of participation in this "underground" made us feel important. We had *our* secret.

Discussion with the group and talks with Vanya Filkov's father threw a shadow over God, estranging me from him. But I still did not want to thrash out questions of religion. I was afraid. I had no right to endanger my family, and so I tried to postpone the final and unavoidable decision.

THE Zionist organization enjoyed great influence among the Jews of our town. At its head stood Solomon Rosenblum. And the Zionist leaders among the *gymnaziya* students were Venya Rosenblum and Izya Aronshtam.

Since the [Russo-German] front had come close to us by that time, our town was filled with refugees, and many new pupils kept coming into our *gymnaziya*. The quota [for Jewish students] was exceeded and—it's almost a joke!—in the *gymnaziya*, named as it was after the Blessed Alexander the First, over a goodly hundred of Jewish children were enrolled. Among them there existed a Zionist group.

In the synagogue, they were always selling some kind of tickets for a trip to Jerusalem. The money went into the gold fund of the Zionist party. Mr. Rosenblum, apparently because he bought more of these tickets than anybody else, was president of that party.

I never bought a single one-ruble ticket for the trip to the Holy Land. My rubles were too hard earned, came to me with too much trouble. So when at the end of the Passover seder I would utter the traditional formula, "Next year in Jerusalem," I never believed at all in these holy words.

I had no love for the Zionists, and the feeling was apparently mutual. My favorite friend in class was Vanya Filkov, and the little Zionists counted me as a *goy*.

But I was still a Jew, and on the 25th of February, 1917, I became a son of honor and joined the respectable family of the sons of Moses. From that day on I had the right to put the cubes with the holy prayers on my head, and seven times a day bind the black-lacquered straps around my arm.

"*Nu*," Mama said to me, "you are big already, Sasha. A Bar Mitzvah." She stroked my arm with the straps around it and cried.

The greatest ordeal awaited me on the coming Sabbath. On that day, as an equal among equals, I was to go to the synagogue for the reading of the Torah. On that important day the rabbi himself was to call me to the platform. Israel Cahan himself had to say, "Sender *ben* Reb Eli is called." I had to go up to the platform, right after the *gabbe* himself, after Solomon Rosenblum, I had to read in singsong the prayer preceding the excerpt from Holy Scripture.

And all the Jews, including Venya Rosenblum, would have to listen to me, son of the late craftsman Shtein, and now a *bona fide* member of the community. At the very

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thought of that coming Sabbath, my heart began to beat faster. The approaching day of triumph was also one of terror. For in the impending ceremony, one very ominous obstacle lay before me threatening to spoil the whole celebration. I had no ear: the chirping of a sparrow and the melody of the funeral prayer both sounded alike to me. Every time I tried to sing a note our singing teacher, Fedor Ivanovich Sepp, would make a face and belch out his favorite oaths. All the ridicule I had to suffer when the time came for singing lessons! Sepp never let me join the class choir, and all through the lesson he made me stand in a corner in full view of the whole class where I served as a target for his sharp wit. And now I had to sing prayers in front of all the Jews.

As the time came near, I put everything else aside and practiced reading the Bible in singsong recitative. Our dwelling turned into a lunatic ward. Mama, who usually stayed home, now found friends to visit somewhere, and our boarder, my great friend Rubiner, a senior at the *gymnaziya*, conceived a hatred for me.

Alone in my room I sat at the table and in a loud voice intoned: "How good are thy tents, Jacob; and thy fields, Israel!" If the sound of my bellowing did not lead God to reduce me then and there to ashes with his holy fire, then obviously God must still have had a certain sense of humor.

THAT Sabbath the synagogue was packed. The *gabbe*, Mr. Rosenblum, proud as King Solomon, sat in the place of greatest honor, right next to old Rabbi Israel Cahan. Rosenblum's silken head-covering shimmered, and his thick reddish beard (it was said that he dyed it with henna) was all ablaze. Yes, here was a *gabbe* indeed! Even the governor-general, Altsimovich, used to shake hands with him.

And though all the Jews knew well enough that our *gabbe* was an arch-scoundrel, and though the whole town talked about the tens of thousands he had made in shady building contracts, still, everybody regarded Mr. Solomon Rosenblum with respect. Yes, this man was pleasing to God! This man deserved to be called first to the Torah after the old rabbi.

Only one person, Hillel Meerson, the old teamster who sat next to me on the last bench, felt otherwise. Every time they called Rosenblum to the Torah, he would spit copiously and deliberately, then rise and go out "to get some air" on the synagogue doorstep. But who bothered about the opinion of Meerson, the teamster, a known rowdy and drunkard?

The pride and joy of our synagogue was our cantor, Haim Zvi Markman. When he hit low notes the panes in the windows shook, and the festive candles on the reading stand blew out. What a Caruso he was! It was said that Haim Zvi Markman had once even sung in the great synagogue in Petersburg. To give a clinching idea of what his voice was like, I need only say that the pogromist Fedor Ivanovich Sepp once came to the synagogue just to listen to him. For a long time afterwards it was whispered about in town that Sepp had pleaded with the cantor to serve as choirmaster for the chorus of The Union of the Russian People [a reactionary, anti-Semitic organization of czarist times]!

On this Sabbath day, then, the entire synagogue was filled, including the women's seats in the gallery. Even my mother, who usually never went to synagogue, had come with an old, shabby prayerbook, and with her nearsighted eyes she kept peering about for her son among the adult Jewish males below.

Of course, the desire to hear me read the Torah was hardly the reason for such a concourse of people. On that same day rumors had circulated through town that things were restless in Petersburg, that Rodzianko was to make some sort of important appearance. And there was whispered talk about the Czar's going into retirement. Where else but in the synagogue was it possible to talk one's fill about all these exciting questions? Normally, such matters would have agitated me greatly. But today the Torah alone, and nothing else, existed for me.

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I ARRIVED at the synagogue just as services were beginning. "Ah, Sender!" said Reb David Bentsman, "you're being called up to the Torah today? *Nu,* congratulations, Sender, congratulations! *Akh,* how the years go by!" He shook his beard and even shed a few tears. "*Ekh!* If only Reb Eli could see this!" and giving a deep sigh, the *shammes* went off to perform his ritual duties.

My neighbor, the teamster Meerson, said nothing. He only gave a vague grunt and fixed his eyes on his prayerbook. This actually offended me.

"You don't happen to know what chapter of the Torah will be read today?" I asked quite calmly. "I think they're going to call me up to the platform."

"I congratulate you, sir, indeed I do!" and he bowed towards me ironically, but did not answer my question.

As always, up to the platform first went Reb Israel Cahan. He took the festive plush cover off the Torah. A cloud of dust rose and Reb Israel gave a cough. He opened the parchment of the scroll. Chanting in his tremulous, senile voice, he read the prayer and everybody listened.

The next one called up was the *gabbe,* Solomon Rosenblum. He read in loud and pealing accents. The holy words seemed to force their way out through the fiery thicket of his beard, and when they had emerged, succulent and dense, their Biblical purity was gone.

I finally found out what chapter was going to be read that day: it was "On the Bearing Out of the Ark." But just when were they going to call on me?

A prayer had already been read by Shemshelevich, the dark little lawyer. Weinbaum, the tobacco dealer, had already been up to the platform. And today even Aronshtam, the druggist, was invited to the Torah. My heart shrank. Tears filled my eyes. Had they really forgotten all about me? "Jews!" I wanted to cry out. "Jews! A sin is being committed: you have forgotten to call on a Bar Mitzvah, a son of honor. Jews, what will God say?"

Hillel Meerson was looking at me ironically. But just about the time when I had decided that all was lost, a voice trumpeted forth from the platform: "The *he-chossen* Sender *ben* Reb Eli is being called!" I walked to the platform as if in a fog.

There I was, next to the Torah. With trembling fingers I touched the parchment. At first I could not even distinguish the letters. But I knew the text by heart, almost the way Israel Cahan did.

My voice sounded unfamiliar. For the first time I was speaking to God in the presence of all Jews. I was emitting a strange, hoarse roar, but to me that voice sounded wonderful. I did not see Reb Israel Cahan raise his gray eyebrows like a martyr, or how Solomon Rosenblum kept laughing into his beard. I shouted out the words of the prayer exactly like Moses in front of the Israelites. The low whisper of David Bentsman barely reached me, "Softer, Sender, softer! You're not talking to deaf mutes here, but to respectable Jews."

I do not remember how I finished. Reeling with fatigue and strain, I went back to my seat without noticing anyone. Hillel Meerson met me with peals of laughter. That morose and silent man had suddenly become cheerful and sociable. "*Ai,* Sender!" he loudly laughed, "*Oi,* Sender! Well done! Thank you! That was a real circus! No, it was even better than a circus! Our cantor Haim Zvi Markman"—he began to choke with his laughter—"Haim Zvi Markman can die in peace now!"

I STILL hear Hillel Meerson's laughter in my ears whenever I think back to that day.

"For whose benefit did I play the clown today?" I heatedly said to Vanya Filkov that evening. "For whom?" For God? For Solomon Rosenblum? For the whole synagogue? They really were laughing at me just as if it were a circus. Can you make anything out of that, Vanya? Here I'd been preparing myself for this day, and then they all laughed at me as if they were at the circus! God? Where is he, this God? Your father's been telling us that this God was all made up. I was

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afraid to think such a thing. But maybe your father's right."

Vanya listened to me sympathetically. He had long ceased believing in God, and he never went to church. He was a great help to me that evening—my very closest friend, Vanya Filkov.

The next day I did not take the black cubes with the holy prayers out of my little bag, nor did I wind the black strap around my arm seven times. It was rebellion. Against whom? Against Solomon Rosenblum? Against Israel Cahan? Against God himself? Yes, the youngest member of our town's Jewish community, a Bar Mitzvah, a son of honor, from yesterday on was in rebellion against God. Alexander Ilyich Shtein. *He-chossen* Sender *ben* Reb Eli.

Monday, the second thing we had in school was singing lesson. All that morning my heart had felt sick. I was filled with foreboding about some sort of great misfortune, and now I could not even beg God to prevent it.

As soon as Fedor Ivanovich entered the room and opened the class-book and looked at me, I got up to go into the corner as usual. But that day he put on a new act. He glanced at me and smiled. It was an evil smile. His pointed beard went up and then came down. He took off his gold-rimmed pince-nez and winked—the whole class saw him do it—to his first assistant sitting in the front desk, Lev Serbilevsky, a cruel anti-Semite. Then he looked at me again.

The class set itself for a novel spectacle. Hunched over his desk, Lev Serbilevsky was already snickering softly. Vanya Filkov began to mutter something furiously between his teeth. Venya Rosenblum looked at the teacher wildly, with open, submissive eyes.

"*Nu*, Shtein," Sepp finally said, "my congratulations! Apparently on Saturday you became a Bar Mitzvah." He even said it just like that—"Bar Mitzvah" in Hebrew. "Let's grow up, Shtein, let's grow up!" Lev Serbilevsky could hold himself in no longer, and burst out laughing. Hypocritically, Sepp gave him a stern look, and then returned to me. "There's a rumor abroad that you sang very brilliantly in the synagogue, Shtein."

I stood there, pale and hostile. In my hand I squeezed my beloved crystal penholder, a present from Aunt Esfira, till it broke.

"What's this all about, Shtein? Here among us you don't want to sing, yet in the synagogue you sing better than the cantor? That's not nice! You have insulted us, Mr. Shtein. You have insulted me, the teacher, and your comrades as well. Have you been insulted, Serbilevsky?"

"I've been insulted, Fedor Ivanovich!" Serbilevsky jumped up eagerly.

The class had not yet decided what Sepp was up to, and remained alert, waiting.

"Shtein, you still have a chance to correct your mistake! Right now, and for us, repeat the number you did in the synagogue!"

I kept my mouth shut.

"You're keeping quiet, are you?" Sepp shrugged his shoulders. Then suddenly changing his tone, he shrieked at me, "Quickly now! This is a command! Don't test my patience, Shtein! I order you to sing!"

A slight shiver ran through me. How passionately I hated my tormentor at that moment! The whole class was watching me. Cornered and alone, I kept my mouth shut. In exasperation, Sepp ran up to my desk. His beard was disheveled, his eyes red with rage. "You little demon!" he screeched. "I'll make you sing!" He seized a ruler and slammed it on my desk. The ruler split in two. The class froze in terror.

And then, unexpectedly, the silence was broken by an uncertain, childish voice. At his desk stood the druggist's son, little yellowish Izya Aronshtam, singing:

Od lo ovdo tikvosenu
Hatikvo hanoshono . . . .

It was the Zionist anthem:

Our hope has not yet vanished,
The old hope—
To return to the Land of our fathers,
To the Land on which lived David.

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The son of the Zionist chairman, Aronshtam's frightened deskmate, Venya Rosenblum, stayed silent. But Izya's racked voice continued, passionate, inspired. This was his way of protesting at Sepp's mockery. And in that instant I fell in love with Izya.

Dumbfounded, Fedor Ivanovich stared at Izya, usually so quiet and modest. Then, leaving me, he rushed towards him. But before he had gone half way he stopped in horror. Other words, louder and more provocative, were drowning out the Zionist anthem. Next to me Vanya Filkov had got up, solid and thickset, and he was singing a song whose every note spoke revolt and protest, whose sound within the walls of that *gymnaziya* named after the Blessed Alexander the First shook its very foundations.

Vanya Filkov was singing the "Marseillaise" in his rather mature but small bass. Someone else in the class joined in. Not for nothing had our CFTSOSL studied the history of the French Revolution. From ringing young throats came the song of the *sans-culottes*.

What an exciting moment that was! The thin little voice of Izya Aronshtam broke and wilted. Sepp made straight for our desk. He went up to Vanya Filkov and grabbed him by the arm. It was then that I joined Vanya, and right into Sepp's face I sang:

Arise, rise up, working people!
Arise for battle, hungry people. . . .

I was faking, of course. Strained and delirious, I kept crying out the words as they came to me. But no one laughed. No one could have stopped me.

Sepp recoiled. But he realized that he had to stop us somehow, drown out our voices. With a nod to Serbilevsky, he himself began in his thick, tremendous bass:

God save our Czar!
Strong, powerful. . . .

There were many who joined in with Sepp but not all. Not everybody sang the czarist anthem. There were some who kept a sullen silence, their eyes glued to the floor. But those who followed Fedor Ivanovich Sepp were quite a few—too many, in fact. And it seemed to me—I may be mistaken, but I think Venya Rosenblum was among those singing, "God save our Czar!"

We would not acknowledge defeat. Izya Aronshtam had long since stopped. But we sang on. Suddenly and loudly, the door opened, and on the threshold appeared the principal. He was in parade uniform with medals and sword. His gray beard was parted in two large, luxuriant tufts. "Insurrectionists!" The principal raised his hands. "Insurrectionists!"

All sound ceased, ours and theirs. Only Serbilevsky, for the last time, bellowed on the run, "God save our Czar!"

"Insurrectionists!" the principal repeated sharply. But then he made a motion with his hand, and in a broken, muted voice said: "His Imperial Majesty, our sovereign, the Emperor Nicholas the Second, has abdicated."

There was not a sound in the classroom.

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THE EAST SIDE GANGSTERS OF THE PAPER-BACKS

The "Jewish" Novels That Millions Buy

MEYER LEVIN

REMEMBER that Jewish boy in the Fannie Hurst era, that sensitive son of the unworldly Talmudist? He wanted to become a great violinist, a great surgeon, a great lawyer. His breed has vanished from today's fiction about the East Side. We are more "realistic" now and our typical Jewish lads become prizefighters, hoodlums, gangsters, and what not. "Typical," that is, if quantity of print means anything. For the Jewish gangster has become a dominant figure in the most widely read form of fiction of our time, the paper-back novel. If this literature reflects and by the same token perpetuates folk beliefs, then it faces Jews with a public-relations question. That it is a delicate one, particularly in these days when censorship is shouted from all directions, should not prevent us from making a critical examination of the material involved.

During the past six years a tremendous change has taken place in American reading habits. Paper-back fiction reprints and original novels in soft covers now sell over 200,000,000 copies a year. For every novel read in hard covers, at least five are read in paper-backs. And this new situation has begun to determine, in many cases, the kind of novel written for hard-cover publication. Paper-back sales of a single title may reach millions, in contrast to the few thousand copies of the same book that will be sold in standard form.

The paper-back novel, then, could well play a most important part in projecting, and even in forming, certain essential popular images. Among these is that of the Jew.

BY FAR the largest-selling titles in paper-backs are the so-called realistic novels, replete with violence and the more "sporty" forms of sex. Thus the popular image of the Southerner is derived from the indolent and inverted characters of Erskine Caldwell's and William Faulkner's books, the image of the city Irishman from James Farrell's novels. The fact that all three have literary status is fortuitous in this case. Talents of lesser stature, however, are responsible for the image of the Jew found in such "realistic" books as *The Hoods*, *A Stone for Danny Fisher*, and *The Big Brokers*. In these and other current novels, all the principal characters are gangsters, and almost all the gangsters are Jews. The paper-back reader may find out there are other kinds of Jews only when he encounters a few soldiers in *The Naked and the Dead* and *The Young Lions*. There is also the portrait, not very readable, of an honorable Jewish merchant family in *The Pedlocks*, but this can scarcely offset the influence of the big-selling novels of violence.

The Jewish gang boss is usually named

IN THE July 1952 issue of COMMENTARY Henry Popkin took exception to the treatment of Jewish characters in the twenty-five cent editions of popular novels, pointing out that by some kind of unspoken agreement every effort was made to "de-Judaize" our mass entertainment. MEYER LEVIN, the well-known novelist, movie-maker, and critic, here takes an almost directly contrary view: that the multiplication of Jewish characters in these books in unsympathetic roles constitutes an encouragement to anti-Semitism; and while he would not favor censorship, either public or "voluntary," he most distinctly believes something should be done to decrease the volume of popular fiction spreading what he deems vicious and dangerous stereotypes of the Jew. But directly contrary points of view are not uncommon in discussions of the effect of popular literature on the "mass mind," and we hope to be able to publish further points of view on this problem within the coming months.

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"Maxie." His boys may be "Spit," "Danny," "Noodles the Shiv," "Cockeye Hymie," "Fat Dovel," "Jake the Goniff," "Nutchy," "Solly." After all, there was an authentic "Bugsy" Siegel.

Maxie and his friends are preferably written about in the first person. As any old *True Confessions* hack knows, this makes a story more believable. And so we have Danny Fisher talking from his grave in Mt. Zion Cemetery, to tell us how Maxie put him there.

Danny's Maxie is Maxie Fields in *A Stone for Danny Fisher,* by Harold Robbins, which was originally presented by the house of Knopf between hard covers as literature. It went to two editions, but the paper-back reprint by Cardinal Press at thirty-five cents a copy is expected to sell millions. For this, as the cover tells us, is "a violent novel of a lonely guy, his girls and his enemies in New York's toughest slum."

Before meeting Maxie, Danny is a nice bright boy whose father, a drugstore owner, has just bought a new home in Brooklyn. Moving in, Danny gets a hazing from the neighborhood Jew-hitters. So when he is Bar Mitzvah'd, he tells us, "Deep inside me I knew I had never wanted to be a Jew. I remembered the first time I had thought about it: the time Paul and his kid brother Eddie had pushed me into the pit at Clarendon and Troy. I remembered asking Mama the next day if we couldn't be something other than Jews." This is the last we hear of the Jewish question. It seems as though Mr. Robbins had started to write a serious novel, and then been deflected by the paper-back possibilities. The change to a novel of sex and violence comes after the first fifty pages.

With the depression, Papa loses his store and the house; the family moves back to Delancey Street. Papa gets a dismal job in a chain drugstore. Danny meets Spit and Sollie and "the gang," shows them he can use his fists, takes part in robbing a five-and-ten, and in robbing and beating Papa's boss.

Danny is also the protégé of his high school gym teacher, Sam Gottkin, an ex-pug who has a basement handy for training —and for girls. Danny is, needless to say, on the way to winning the Golden Gloves.

THE moment has come for Maxie Fields, who runs a check-cashing service for a front. He summons Danny. "I followed Spit into the store and through a small room with cages like a bank. . . . We passed through a horse room, where a few men were standing idly studying a blackboard. . . . I followed Spit up to the first landing, where he stopped in front of a door and walked in. I stopped dead in my tracks, blinking my eyes. I had heard about this but I never really believed it. This room was out of the moving pictures, it didn't belong in a partly condemned old dump like this.

"A big man with a red face, a fat stomach, and the largest shoes I ever saw came toward us. Nobody had to tell me: this was Maxie Fields. . . ."

Maxie wants him to throw the Golden Gloves fight so Maxie can make some real money betting on it. When Danny balks, Maxie calls in his cocktail-serving girl, tells her to take off her dress, and offers Danny her $20-an-hour charms as inducement. Later, just to make sure that the reader doesn't imagine things get out of the family, we are informed that Ronnie's real name is Sara Dorfman. This typically Jewish East Side beauty is in thrall to Maxie because she needs money to care for her crippled brother.

Danny collects in advance for throwing the fight, but inadvertently wins. He flees Maxie's "Collector," and Spit with his vengeful knife. But he leaves the bribe money for Papa to buy a new drugstore with. Papa, a true Jewish parent, declares that this "son of the devil is no son of ours," and that "fighting is a murderer's business."

In a few years Danny returns to Delancey Street to find his true love, Nellie, a Catholic girl he met on his first heist, still waiting behind the frankfurter counter at the five-and-ten. He marries her. They go on relief. Their baby dies.

Danny muscles his way into the office of

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his one-time coach, Sam Gottkin, now a big concessionaire. Sam has married Danny's sister, Miriam, who found him repulsive but wanted to help the family, and—being no boxer—had to sell her body in the only way a good Jewish girl knows.

Danny catches his lecherous brother-in-law in the act with a secretary, and blackmails him into giving him a job. He rises fast. The war is on—none of these athletic Jews are bothered by the army—and Danny becomes a big-time black-marketeer on his own. But Sam, in a friendly Jewish brother-in-law way, hijacks $100,000 worth of Danny's merchandise, so Danny goes back to the all-powerful Maxie, who will rub out the brother-in-law. Cocktail-serving Ronnie, too, has come back from flight, and in that gilded back room Maxie rubs his hands, gloating, "Nobody can keep away from Maxie Fields, baby, that's what I always said."

Meanwhile Nellie is having another baby. Danny has bought back the old family mansion in Brooklyn, and put Nellie in it, and Nellie falls down the stairs for joy, and a transfusion is needed to save the baby, and whose blood is the only blood that will do? Jewish gangster blood always sticks together. So it is brother-in-law Sam who gives it. After all, a small retribution for $100,000 worth of cigarettes. Now Danny remembers that Maxie and his boys, with the "chopper," are waiting in their souped-up car for Sam to appear on the street. So Danny runs out and gets into Sam's car, and the burp-gun speaks, because with Maxie, as with Shylock, a deal is a deal.

MR. ROBBINS' portrait of what really goes on in those same East Side streets where Fannie Hurst could only find fiddlers is confirmed by another first-person narrator who signs himself "Harry Grey." Under the slogan "Good Reading for the Millions," Signet offers us this thirty-five-cent "Giant" with a plug by none other than the great Mickey Spillane. "This book by Harry Grey—an ex-hood himself—will shock you, but you must read it. He dares to tell the truth about cold-blooded killer mobs and how they work." We are offered blurbs from the New York *Times* and the Wichita *Eagle*, who seem to take the fact-pitch seriously. "One of the most terrific fact stories to come out of New York in a century," says the *Eagle*. And "the reader . . . will recognize many of the criminal world's top-drawer figures, past and present," says the *Times*.

Thus *The Hoods* sells "authenticity" in competition with the "literary quality" of Pocketbooks' *Danny Fisher*. And instead of being a nice boy misled by a murderous Maxie, Grey's hero, "Noodles the Shiv," is a Robin Hood who provides escape angles for his boss-pal, Maxie the murderer.

Good old Delancey Street is again the locale, and the dropping of Yiddishisms begins on page 6 with Noodles and Maxie in grammar school. Maxie loudly advises the lady teacher to *"kish mir"* you know where.

Mr. Grey's Maxie is "Big Maxie"; he has an uncle who is an undertaker, and the embalming parlor becomes a hangout for the boys, whose specialty is to make embarrassing bodies disappear. They pose as rug-cleaners, wrap up any corpses lying around, and walk out of anywhere. Their services are soon in demand by "The Combination," and as the boys rise in the world their rugs rise in quality, until they are using orientals to wrap up high politicos who have met sudden death.

For authentic Jewish atmosphere, we have "deals" plotted in Yonah Schimmel's knisherie. And we have poor Noodles, as a youth, watching his family evicted because his sick father can't work. Noodles gets a four-dollar-a-week job on a laundry truck, and gets beaten up by thugs when he joins a strike. So who wouldn't become a crook?

The boys are caught in a "small-time drugstore heist." "In the getaway in Cockeye Hymie's brother's cab, with the police after us, we ran out of gas on Delancey Street." One lad gets knocked off, two "take the rap," with Noodles sent to a Jewish Home, Cedar Knolls—incidentally, the name of a well-known Jewish institution for delinquent girls. He enjoys it, reading *Don Quixote*.

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"The day I was to be dismissed, the rabbi called me to his study and gave me his final sermon, How a good Jewish boy should behave. It went in one ear and out the other. . . ."

So our Robin Hoods are sitting around their morgue one morning. "Cockeye went over to Ratner's for a couple of dozen hot bagels. . . . The rabbi from the shul around the corner came in. In Yiddish he told us a pathetic story about an unexpected death in a very poor family. 'No burial plot and no money for the funeral.' Maxie called the cemetery and told them to charge the plot to us. He gave the rabbi permission to use our funeral parlor and to help himself to a pine box from our storeroom. The rabbi's story reminded me of the like predicament my family was in years ago. I included the hearse and two funeral cars."

In reward, the rabbi tells Noodles something he hadn't known about his own sickly father. "In the ghettos of Odessa your father was called Srulick the Shtarker. He was a well-known horse thief and smuggler. . . ." The proud son proceeds to outdo his old man. We have rapes, murders, pulp-beatings galore. A jewel robbery scene includes the requisite masochistic nymphomaniac who begs to be tied and beaten. The taking over of a rival operation includes the requisite homosexual incidents. "Authenticity" is provided by casual mention of conferences with Capone. The "Combination" tenderly instructs Noodles to help a striking group of elevator operators, so he invades the strike-breaker agency, poses as the boss and feeds knockout drops to the bruisers as they report for work. Soon a representative of the bosses arrives. "Moritz was a 'white Jew' all right . . . the type that uses any means for self gain. He used his Jewishness, his Masonry, anything, like a whore. Yes, you find guys like this Moritz everywhere. . . . The gist of his spiel was, 'We Jews got to stick together. We're an abused minority; we got to do things for each other. Come over on our side of the fence, we'll pay you well.'"

Says Robin Hood Noodles, "'Sure I agree with you. We're in a minority, and we're oppressed. But you stupid sonofabitch, what has that got to do with this situation? I'll bet fifty percent of the elevator pickets walking in the street are Jewish. But you, as a Jew, don't give a damn.'" Ergo, even gangster Jews are better than Jewish businessmen.

Noodles, Maxie's brain, provides clever alibis such as having the boys officially listed as in jail when they slip out to do a rat-tat-tat job for the "Combination." Finally Big Maxie gets really big: he starts sitting in a throne chair at their meetings, and planning how to stick up the Federal Reserve Bank. Noodles, realizing this is suicidal, again seeks the safety of jail for Maxie by tipping off the Feds when Maxie is on a routine liquor-running job. But alas, in the ensuing shooting fray Maxie is killed, and consequently our Noodles is almost dipped in a bath of cement for stooling. However, he fights his way out, and escapes to a life of literary leisure. Moral: the clever Jewish crook gets away with murder.

EQUALLY "authentic" is Avon's fifty-cent double-decker, *The Big Brokers* by Irving Shulman, whose novels are usually presented as not only authentic but "sociological." This one is supposed to reflect the Kefauver investigation findings. It also includes some of the surviving characters from the street-gang boys of *The Amboy Dukes* and *Cry Tough*. Brooklyn slums instead of Delancey Street provide the atmosphere. But now, the boys have arrived in the big time, and the action swings from New York to Hollywood, and to a plush gambling hotel in Las Vegas.

Maxie appears this time under the name of Itzik Yanowitz who got his start as a strike-breaker for clothing manufacturers and rose to be one of the three top men in a "Combination." Itzik is given to heart-rending confidences about how his wife divorced him, and wouldn't let him see his son. How he had to stand at the back of the *shul* to see the boy's Bar Mitzvah. This drove him into an alcoholic breakdown, and only the devotion of his friend "Fat Dovel" Apfelschpein brought him back to health. Fat Dovel, a

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kind of minor partner, produces bright little side ideas for Itzik like forcing their protected clothing manufacturers to buy ads in a trade journal founded for no other purpose but that.

Itzik and Fat Dovel are David and Jonathan, having their laughs together, eating good Jewish meals together. But this doesn't prevent Itzik, with a heavy heart, from having Fat Dovel rubbed out when it looks like he might spill too much about their bank-fronted horse room at a government investigation. "Dovel was his enemy, and because Dovel had to die Itzik went into his bathroom and wept . . . and Charley . . . hurried to the bathroom off the master bedroom and saw his boss hunched on the seat, crying with heavy sobs into his knuckles." As a last tender gesture, Itzik includes Dovel's wife Sadie in their permanent disappearance. Then he buys two mourning candles.

Itzik is a man of principle, however, and when the empire is toppling and the boys suggest going to Detroit to muscle in on the union racket, he says "no." "Itzik looked pained. 'You know I don't like to touch what belongs to someone else. But we could study their methods. The plant gambling in Detroit,' he ruminated, 'is worth about thirty million a year.'"

His scruples do not prevent him from ordering and enjoying many a murder, and from being proud of the kids he picked up and trained for this work. There is "Mitch" Wolf, of the Amboy Dukes. When Mitch was trying to go straight as an assistant cutter for Sam Rappaport, Itzik, who was Sam's protection man, took the boy along on a party and fixed him up with $100-a-night Joyce. Soon Mitch threw over his nice Jewish girl and went out to roll a few drunks in order to collect enough for another night.

So we find Mitch and Joyce out in Las Vegas, with a couple of other ex-Dukes, "Bull" Benson and Larry Tone (*né* Tunafish), with the assignment of running Itzik's gambling hotel. But first they have to rub out the previous incumbent, who didn't do well enough financially for Itzik.

They also rub out a "bookmaker's bookie" named Brodsky, and a "Bitsy" Knowsky, etc. Bull gets hurt on one of these forays, and nearly loses the use of one arm. This inspires author Shulman to inject some more Jewish background stuff. Bull gets remorse, and going religious, prevails upon one of the showgirls in Las Vegas, who is likewise Jewish, to slip over to Los Angeles and buy him a Hebrew prayerbook and an authentic *yarmelke*. He even tries to hold a Passover service in his hotel room. And when one of the boys remarks that "The malachhamoves doesn't cut his price," Bull has hallucinations that the *malachhamoves* is coming into his room after him. He goes berserk, and when last heard from is in an asylum in Vera Cruz, whither he has been conveyed by the last of the Dukes, Larry, who will doubtless become the subject of another Shulman gangster epic.

TRUE, there are Irish and Italian and Anglo-Saxon gangsters mixed in with the Jews in all these novels. In *The Big Brokers*, Itzik and his Irish partner walk on either side of their Italian colleague, putting him on the spot to be mowed down by Itzik's hoods. But the central figures in all these books are Jews, and the atmosphere is slum-Jewish.

Of course one can argue that all this material should be dismissed as mere entertainment, without lasting effect on the psyche of the reader. I don't agree. I think that it leaves an impress. And it happens that serious writers are presenting similar images of the Jew in a way that may leave a deeper impress.

Take Leonard Bishop's double-decker, *Down All Your Streets*. A genuinely talented writer, Bishop has been tempted, apparently, by the high sales in this sensationalized field. His East Side portrait deals with one "Boxie" Lewis and family. Boxie, an ex-pug, is a thieving dope addict who ends up peddling drugs to high school kids. While the family milieu is pictured in a more "positive" vein, and while the portrait of Boxie's wife Lil has high merit, the novel nevertheless adds to the Jewish rogues' gallery on the stands.

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And Mr. Bishop's second novel, *Days of My Love,* which is certain to appear in paper-backs next season, shows what a deleterious influence the paper-back novel can have upon a talented writer. Again the story is about a Jewish family. The father operates a telephone solicitation racket, using a Catholic charity as a front. There are scenes of sex, perversion, and violence that seem obviously injected to catch the paper-back buyer—for a "hot" novel can draw as high as $35,000 in advance royalties from these reprint sources.

Quite gratuitously, Bishop inserts a scene in which a "high executive in the UJA" becomes friendly with the charity racketeer. "I know promotions like yours backwards, because that's my business," says the UJA man. . . . "A man like you, Dave, with your business sense and reputation, can be an invaluable asset to my organization." And at the end of the book, Dave is actually recruited into the UJA!

Thus even the main financial resort of the Jewish people in distress, an organization that, outside Mr. Bishop's book, is the symbol and vehicle of a humanitarianism unrivaled in history, becomes part of the background of Jewish gangsterdom. To the uninformed reader, the UJA and the Combination can look as though cut on the same pattern.

It seems to me that fictional episodes of this kind, and novels of this kind, have their source in classic impulses of Jewish self-hatred. Nor is this a new tendency in American fiction. The first notable example was Jerome Weidman's story of a business cheat, *I Can Get It for You Wholesale,* which was followed by a story of similar character in Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run.* Such novels are socio-critical, yes, but their emphasis on negative characters is not accidental. Sammy Glick and Harry Bogan have become synonyms for Jewish perfidy: minor Shylocks and Fagins.

But there is an even deeper tradition to which these characters may be linked. The fundamental image of the "Maxie" character is that of a secret power operating in a secret room, handing down decisions that mean life and death for other people. Big Maxie, in *The Hoods,* becomes a devil-king in his undertaking parlor. Maxie Fields, in *A Stone for Danny Fisher,* presides in a palace behind a slum façade, with a girl slave in attendance. Itzik telephones across a continent, ordering death.

These gang bosses call to mind a powerful image. Is not this modern Jew-gangster psychologically linked to the all-powerful Jew of secret world conspiracy, the archetypal Jew of *Der Stürmer* and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, who from some hidden chamber pulls the strings of world intrigue? Is not the Jew as gang-boss simply a new version of an old anti-Semitic stereotype?

Do we not find him, for example, in *The Great Gatsby,* an elegant *goyish* predecessor of today's Delancey Street gangster novels? To confront the gang-boss who pulled the strings on Gatsby, Fitzgerald's narrator seeks him out in an obscure office. "A lovely Jewess appeared at an interior door, and scrutinized me with black hostile eyes. . . ." (Jewesses are always "lovely" because the sinister and the attractive go together.) And presently, behind the partition, the narrator meets Meyer Wolfsheim himself, the boss killer who wasn't loyal enough to his *goyish* minion to go to Gatsby's funeral.

"I raised him up out of nothing, right out of the gutter. I saw right away he was a fine-appearing, gentlemanly young man, and when he told me he was an Oggsford, I knew I could use him good. I got him to join up in the American Legion and he used to stand high there. Right off he did work for a client of mine in Albany—"

But Meyer (the "Maxie") Wolfsheim won't go to Gatsby's funeral. "When a man gets killed I never like to get mixed up in it in any way. I keep out."

Thus a cardinal anti-Semitic accusation, that of cold-hearted disloyalty, is embodied in Meyer Wolfsheim, as it is in Mitch Wolf when he turns state's evidence against the "Big Brokers," and in Danny Fisher when he hires Maxie to kill his brother-in-law.

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Scott Fitzgerald, I assume, carelessly perpetuated a Jew-image he had absorbed from myth; our own Jewish writers may be perpetuating the same image by compulsive self-hatred. They may imagine they are showing the myth up, to be destroyed; but in actuality they are confirming a sinister image of the typical Jew for the mass-reader.

For it seems to me that in the public's consciousness the Maxies fuse with the Shylocks and the Prague "world-Jewish-Zionist" conspirators, and the ritual slaughterers.

It may be argued that Maxie is not supposed to possess international power, or to be an agent of a worldwide Jewish cabal, and that Maxie therefore does not conform to the legendary image in its essentially terrifying aspect, and therefore cannot be "harmful." If identification with this international-Jew image is the only criterion for the anti-Semitic stereotype, then Fagin and Shylock, too, are innocent figures. Yet they have become hate-words used against the Jew.

There need be no absolutes in propaganda. The evil Jew is a composite of hated characteristics. Every repetition of a propaganda point recalls the whole image, as the Nazis well knew. A Jew shown as murderer, lecher, cheat, confirms the whole. The millions who were destroyed in Europe were not supposed each to be members of the secret inner cabal, but they were all supposed to be carriers of vile "typical" Jewish characteristics.

MUST we therefore object to the slightest presentation of a Jew in anything but a favorable light? Of course not! Jews, I think, have traditionally shown a remarkable willingness to pay the price of truth, including the bitter, and including the falsehoods that are sometimes inextricably mingled in truths. And every writer must feel free to present the truth as he sees it. But this specific problem relating to the image of the Jew must make the writer all the more sensitive, all the more conscientious in testing his truth. Nor does freedom of expression for the writer demand that the reader should be intimidated from showing him meanings of which he may have been unaware. Nor does everything written and promoted in response to sales opportunity have to be accepted as the free expression of a writer's spirit.

The writer should want to understand the source of his image. What is influencing him? Does he write from within himself, or is he merely producing a facsimile of other current images? Is he writing under the distortion of hatred? from motives of revenge? for mere gain? from irresponsible prankishness?

In the whole context of the Jewish image, distortions and exaggerations of emphasis can constitute dangers which fully aware writers might themselves not want to produce. And I feel that this applies to the current crop of gangster portraits.

It may be argued that the gangster Jew in himself refutes the anti-Semitic stereotype of the Jew as a physical coward. The mythical Jew gets others to do his murdering for him. And he does not have them kill fellow Jews. Only Gentiles. In the present crop of gangster novels, Jews have no hesitation about killing other Jews. We might therefore conclude that these novels have a "wholesome" effect insofar as they show Jews to be like any other gangsters, and engaged only in business killings, not in international plots.

All this may be true, particularly of the rank and file of the mobs. But the Maxies, like Fitzgerald's Meyer Wolfsheim, do not soil their hands with weapons. Maxie Fields and Itzik Yanowitz are still Jews who get others to do their killing for them. The last we see of Maxie Fields is the glow of his cigar as he sits back in his car while a minion pulls the trigger on Danny Fisher.

As for the international-plot link, it is true this has been absent from gangster fiction, though the reader may supply intimations of internationalism from his well of crime-reading about opium rings and such. The direct accusation of an international political plot is only one step further, when we read about "Combinations" and manipulations in labor fields.

The fact that Jews may also be victims,

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in these novels, can again be argued in both directions. To the academic student of anti-Semitism, it may mean that the image is broken. But to the anti-Semite, it may simply mean that the Jew is even lower, viler than he had ever thought, since the hitherto alleviating characteristic of loyalty at least to his own kind is now also disproven: in these novels he will sacrifice his own people for personal gain.

And the point that some Jews in these books are shown as exponents of physical violence need not be looked upon as necessarily erasing the stereotype of the cunning or cowardly Jew. The reader susceptible to anti-Semitic suggestion may simply pick up the violence as one more evil trait, and not worry about consistency. Since when, in any case, has anti-Semitism been logically coherent?

Indeed, the anti-Semitic image of the Jew has never been clean of blood, for the blood-ritual accusation has been part of it, and the recent Moscow "doctors' plot," though repudiated, served as evidence that the legend has not died, and that a modern, "scientific" version of it can be offered to the world.

How does it happen that Jewish writers and Jewish publishers are just now supplying these Jewish gangsters in such fictional quantity? Because there is a market for them. The high market in paper-backs, as has been pointed out, is for "realism." The buyers seem to be stimulated by the notion that they will truly find out about "life," about areas of life that have been kept taboo—sex, and crime, and secret influences. Indeed, the books offer themselves, to a degree, as sociology and psychology for the average man—presumably "informational," even scientific.

Thus the books that sound most "true" are the ones most popular. The use of the confessional tone, and of recognizable local color, provides this illusion of truth. And Jewish local color is convincing. (And Jews are also, perhaps, part of the "mystery" of life.) Moreover, it "comes natural" to Jewish writers who remember that it's easiest to write about what one knows about. They may not know too much about inner gang life, but they know the names of the East Side streets, they know lots of Yiddish locutions. The same trick could be done with Polish or Italian background, and it would be equally distasteful to Polish or Italian Americans. But there is an added appeal in the Jewish gangster story; it has novelty, and it contains the implicit promise of the revelation of something more, of something occult and secret that pertains to the "mysterious" Jews. Thus, Bull Benson, seized by remorse, reverting to religion, may be behaving in a fashion that would be a cliché if he were a Catholic, but clothed in a *tallis*, he gives the reader the sensation of having a peep into inner truth.

Whether or not they reason the matter out in this way, publishers who generally shy away from fiction about Jews have no resistance to this kind of fiction, for they know that it sells. Perhaps not to the literati—but it sells. Dial Press exploited the formula with *The Amboy Dukes*, and have found a new provider in Leonard Bishop. Three of the large paper-back publishers are pushing their separate items in the field, each perhaps convinced he ought to have one since his competitors have a similar article.

Should "something be done"? This raises first of all the question of literary truth. Are we being presented here with works that contain an amount of such truth? Is the Jewishness of these hoodlums a determinant of their behavior?

An answer may be found in a recent revision of Irving Shulman's "sociological" *Amboy Dukes*. The new edition bears few Jewish references, Yiddishisms are rare, Bar Mitzvah has become a vague confirmation, and Frank Goldfarb has become "Frank Abbott." What has this done to the book? It has merely revealed *The Amboy Dukes* to be a routine little crime novel. It would appear, then, that the use of Jewish atmosphere gave this story a "smear of realism," the Jewish background being exploited to provide an illusion of depth for an essentially shal-

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low set of characters. The same effect, I think, would result if the identifying Jewish touches were removed from *The Hoods* and *A Stone for Danny Fisher*.

Shulman's revisions seem to be an admission that nothing literary was to be gained from the Jewishness of the book, and that some harm might result. "Something was done," and in a way that recognized the public relations aspects of paper-back circulation.

What, are hard-cover readers to be treated as a superior species? Is there to be a kind of censorship for paper-backs? Even if it is self-censorship by some voluntary agency set up within the paper-back industry, I would advocate nothing of the kind.

I would prefer rather to have the paper-backs' potential for harm serve to make some writers, and publishers, aware of factors that apply just as strongly to hard-cover books. An uneasiness over the effect of a book's contents would be seen to mean that the book was never true in depth, never true in representative quality, and the realization that it may give some wrong ideas to the less discriminating in a vast body of readers would thus alert writers and publishers to a responsibility they should have felt in the first place.

BASICALLY, the question becomes one of literary judgment—and conscience, both applicable alike to hard-cover and paper-back books. A book about Jewish gangsters that was completely penetrating, that awakened *rachmones*, would be a matter for praise. But literary judgments are always personal. And repression, even of trash, by any form of censorship, is out of the question. Organized opinion-pressure is just as dangerous, as one may see from the effect of the McCarthy campaigns on the U. S. Information Service libraries.

And I can speak from personal experience with the oversensitive Jewish reader, for when my own novel, *The Old Bunch*, appeared in the 30's, there were some who objected to my having presented, in a minor character, a Jew who was a venal politician.

Yet it is precisely because I have written fiction in the same field that I feel I am in a position to argue that Jewish writers must recognize a particular responsibility in regard to the image of the Jew. And I believe we as Jews do have a special problem. The Irish, the Italians, or any other group do not have to deal with anything as dangerous to themselves as the anti-Semitic myth. For this reason, the prevalence of these books about Jewish gangsters is to me a matter for concern. I think it is a matter that can be remedied by awareness on the part of writers, publishers, critics, and public. Such an awareness might cause the writer more often to ask himself, "Is this true in depth? Am I merely perpetuating a myth without showing that it is a myth? Am I tailoring my writing to hot sales? Am I perhaps working out some self-hating impulses, or am I truly trying to make my characters understood?"

What is today being published about Jews in America, particularly in the paper-backs, provides a fantastically lopsided picture of Jewish life and character. Here we have several huge novels about Jews as gangsters, with virtually nothing about any other kind of Jews at all. The paper-back reader would have to conclude that gangsterism was the chief, if not only, occupation of Jews.

In the absence of other images, these novels cannot leave the undiscriminating reader merely with the casual feeling that "Jews are like everybody else." I rather think they leave readers with the feeling that "Jews are cheats, gangsters, murderers. They admit it themselves."

Lest I fall victim to the misinterpretation that comes so readily in questions of this kind, I should like categorically to repeat that I hold for no form of censorship. Nor do I want to suggest that Jews, or others, should abstain from writing about Jews in an unpleasant light. I want rather to suggest an appeal to integrity and responsibility on the part of writers and publishers, and that, on the part of us all, we should encourage a whole and representative literature about Jewish life.

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THE "NOUVEAU RICHE" AND CULTURE

The Patron Through the Ages

ALVIN JOHNSON

"NOUVEAU RICHE" – what a world of contempt lies in that phrase! Is it not a recognized fact that new money, got from enterprise, "trade," and "huckstering," is vulgar, clamorous, and uncouth; but that as money grows older, turning into solid hereditary fortunes and vested rights, it tends to slough off its original vulgarity and lawlessness and to take on a veneer of culture, at first thin and likely to curl up in unfavorable weather, but later solid and firm, with rich dark antique color tones?

True; but is it this respectable cultivated money, as it becomes "old money," that supports creative art? As a matter of fact is it true—as is universally believed—that for the patronage of the great artist of the future, society must look to the oldest money, to established wealth, the landed classes, the aristocracy, and their like?

Let us look at the record of history. After Salamis and Marathon, Athens became the dominant commercial center of the Aegean. Her commercial vessels skimmed the seas from the mouth of the Nile to Cadiz. From the depressed Greek cities on the Asia Minor coast the trading houses sent their junior partners to Athens, to live as *metics*, in peace and freedom. Native Athenians joined in the race for wealth, and the newly enriched pushed aside, politically, the old fellows with hereditary oil and wine and corn from holdings in the stony demes. The silver mines of Laurium entered upon a new era of technology, enriching additional Athenians and "corrupting" them away from the antique tradition. Money-making was the order of the day—and it was this period of new money-making that gave us the Athens we love the more the less we understand her. New money gave us the Parthenon and the theater of Dionysus; new money trained the actors and the choruses of the great tragedies. Pericles, to be sure, looted the subsidies of the allied cities, intended to maintain a fleet for the common defense. But this loot was made into detachable gold plates for the chryselephantine statue of Athena. New money gave free rein to Phidias, who brought Aphrodite down to the human level, for which he was prosecuted for impiety.

Roman culture down to the Punic Wars was wholly traditional, from the laws of the Twelve Tables and the *opus reticulatum* in building, to the archaic statuary—traditional religiosity—and the Fescennine farces, rich in the innocent obscenities of primordial culture. The crushing of Carthage and the removal to Rome of the Hebrew-speaking Carthaginian business houses—regarded as "Judaei" by the Romans until assimilation had worked its way—inaugurated a vast commercial empire for Rome. The conquered Greek cities of southern Italy and Sicily, later conquered Greece itself, poured a world of new cultural ideas into Rome, which fought valiantly but vainly for the tradition of old Rome, when

Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither goods nor gold,
Nor limb nor life, nor son nor wife,
In the brave days of old.

The new Rome welcomed Plautus and

EVERYBODY knows that "new money" vulgarizes culture—and civilization is dependent on aristocratic wealth for the advancement of creative thought, art, and literature. But alas for what everybody knows; the historical record tells a somewhat different story, according to ALVIN JOHNSON, who has spent most of his fourscore years advancing culture. He is, of course, the editor of the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences and founder and president emeritus of the New School for Social Research.

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Terence in comedy, Andronicus and Livy in history, and Panaetius, the head of the Scipionic circle that transformed the mechanical tradition of the Twelve Tables into the Roman law through the principle that every pleading must present the facts, the law, but also the ethical situation—and this Roman law still serves half the Western world. Augustus claimed that he found Rome brick—*opus reticulatum*—and left it marble. Anyone who has admired the shrine of Hercules at Tivoli realizes that building with marble goes back to the great spurt in cultural development in the money-making Scipionic era.

One has only to mention the Renaissance following upon the Crusades, the tremendous expansion of Italian shipping and trade, and the looting of the rich cities of the eastern Mediterranean; and Elizabethan England, with enterprise in exploration and projects of colonization and plunder going hand in hand with an upsurge of poetry and the drama. The popular history books credit the *Roi Soleil* with the literary and artistic splendors of late 17th- and early 18th-century France, and disregard Colbert and the vast advances in French industry and trade.

The history of Venice offers a classic example of the transformation of new money, reckless and lawless, into old money, cultivated, respectful of the government, and indeed appropriating the government to its own uses.

At the time of Titian and Tintoretto the merchants of Venice were still equal to anything. For their manufacture of fine woolens, much in demand in the East for the Moslem fez, they sent a fleet around to England every year, to collect the best English fleeces. The western Mediterranean and the Bay of Biscay—even the English Channel—were infested with pirates. The merchants of Venice therefore annexed to their wool fleet a convoy of fighting ships.

A later generation of merchants found it anomalous for private citizens to finance fighting ships. Being dominant politically, they unloaded the convoy on the government. Another generation of merchants, still more cultivated, felt that it was wrong to impose on them the risks of the fleet. They had the government take over the whole enterprise. Next, of course, the wool fleet disappeared into history. So, too, the creativeness of Venetian art.

We like to believe that the decay of the Italian cities was due to the opening of the route around the Cape of Good Hope, and the displacement of trade and shipping to the Atlantic. Perhaps. But well before Vasco da Gama, one can trace the dubious effects on commerce and art of the transformation of new money into old money, of enterprise into vested rights, of private initiative into government administration.

Look now at America today, with its technology a richer source of wealth than the loot of the Indies. Is a cultural development visible? Our fine arts are still timid, imitative as fine arts always are. Our artists still advance as skirmishers, not in serried ranks with a common purpose. But the same could have been said of the Renaissance artists down through the time of Fra Lippo Lippi—moreover, the skirmishers are multiplying. And as for science, a major factor in culture since the time of Aristotle and Lucretius, ours is a brilliant age. Nor need we be contemptuous of the art of building. Scorn our modernist architecture if you must; you will have to admit that never in the golden ages of architecture was a bridge built that could compare in splendor with the George Washington or the San Francisco Bay bridges. And must we look down our noses at the Empire State and the Chrysler buildings, Rockefeller Center and One Wall Street, concretions of new money?

In our present-day America more money is given by private individuals every year for the support of education, scientific research, medical service and administration, libraries and museums, than has been given for similar objects in Europe in five hundred years. Who are these wonderful American philanthropists? There are ten or twelve men or family groups who produce three-quarters of the sum. There are fifty thousand small busi-

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nessmen, small professionals—one-half of them Jewish—who produce most of the other quarter. Practically all of them, large contributor and small, are in command of new money. There is a lot of old money in the United States, in Back Bay Boston, New York's Park Avenue, Washington, Richmond, New Orleans, Philadelphia—indeed, in every city and town in America. The old money, unless it is held by Quakers and Jews, specializes in presenting to the world a pattern of gracious living, and in maintaining the values of the good Queen Victoria and the good stout President Cleveland.

I have tried to find an explanation why old money in the hands of Quakers and Jews is not immune to good causes. I've inquired of both Quakers and Jews. I've listened to their explanations. "We believe in culture." Or, "We believe in education." Or, "We believe in God." Now, what can a social scientist make of that?

CREATIVE culture, it would seem, blooms in a period of rapidly expanding economy if one condition is realized: *freedom*. The Age of Pericles, the Scipionic, and, later, the Augustan Age were free. Pericles did indeed have the tough traditionalists of the demes to harass him; but he was free enough to cling to Aspasia, a *metic*, that is, an alien, whom he could mate with but not lawfully marry. Catullus was free under Julius Caesar, and if Vergil and Horace were drawn into propaganda for the House of Caesar, they could for the most part build their poetic structures in freedom.

But from the accession of Tiberius to the end of Domitian's reign, there was no freedom. There was no poetry worth reading, no painting worth preserving, no sculpture except the portrait busts worth the consideration of posterity. There was money, new and old, all equally important to stimulate art creation. With Trajan and the succession of good emperors, freedom came back, but into a world that had lost its impulse toward economic expansion.

There was freedom in the Renaissance; if Giotto could not be free in Florence he could go to Padua, where Galileo, too, found freedom. There was freedom in Elizabethan England—freedom sometimes punctuated by a head on the spikes of London Bridge. We are free in America today—well, pretty free. And we have before us the pattern of total unfreedom in Soviet Russia, where not only political and social philosophy, but art, literature, biology, anthropology, philology, and mineralogy must conform to the Bible of Karl Marx as interpreted by his Soviet prophets. Alas, that among so many of our artists and poets, even the successful ones living in Hollywood with huge incomes and transient or intermittent wives, there is (or was) a delusion that the future of creative art lies with the total unfreedom of the Soviet republic.

I HAVE rung the changes on old and new money, freedom and slavery, but I have said nothing about idealism and materialism. Indeed, my interpretation of the conditions of creative culture will perhaps be set down as crassly materialistic, if money is "material" and private quirks and grouches are "ideal."

Some, indeed, may be shocked by my insistence on the dependence of creative culture upon the explosive phases of wealth. It was once my privilege to introduce Stokowski to Frank Lloyd Wright. What waves of idealism smote my receptive ears! What superiority to money! It was like the superiority of a good ship to the waves on which she floats.

Am I not ignoring the potent force of ideals? I am not; but the ideals that count in this connection are the ideals of good workmanship. Giotto was dominated by an ideal in his work in the chapel at Padua; Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel; but they were noble ideals of work to be nobly done. Benvenuto Cellini appears not to have had a religious or social ideal in his head, but he had a powerful ideal of good workmanship. No doubt Michelangelo had noble religious ideals; but it was certainly the ideal of artistic creation that forced him to cripple himself in the work on the Sistine Chapel. The only personal glimpse I have of Giotto is Boccac-

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cio's account of his mule-back ride in from Fiesole with the greatest lawyer of Florence. The rain poured down on them, and rubber coats had not yet been invented. The riders were of course in sad state. The lawyer chuckled, as lawyers will.

"No one seeing us now would realize that you are the best stonecutter in Florence."

"Nor," said Giotto, "would anyone think you are the most eminent pettifogger in the city."

Ex pede Herculem. The conversation is not that of two super-heated idealists but of two good workmen. I studied the Giotto frescoes in Padua. The ideal of workmanship is vividly present, but the religiosity is only a premise.

It is not my argument that creative culture receives its impetus from new money by way of easy patronage. What I wish to stress as much more important is the spirit of freedom in times of new money, the spirit of enterprise, of a period of adventure, speculation, life or death risks taken gallantly. The artist is caught up by the spirit of the time, breaks the shackles of tradition, and proceeds boldly

To paint the thing as he sees it
For the God of things as they are.

It is true that there is limitation, and oppression, in money, even in new money. Any Hollywood artist, many a Greenwich Village artist, will throw at me the taunt, "What did your bourgeois do to Rivera's great picture, idealizing Soviet Russia, condemning capitalist imperialism?" The bourgeois rejected it, as mankind has always rejected prostitution, both the smallish prostitution of the back alley and the big prostitution of the propagandist.

A DESOLATING idea assails us. In history creative culture has been a phenomenon of brief periods of economic expansion; as a rule, expansion based on the plunder of older cultures. There are no older cultures left to plunder. Must we then agree: creative culture figured nobly in past history but now has no future?

This would be to forget the role of science in the history of culture. To Thales, Aristotle, Lucretius; to Galileo, Bacon, Leibnitz, Einstein, science is an essential part of culture, perhaps the most important part. Down to our time science has developed by fits and starts, like poetry and painting. But today science, the physical sciences, and the sciences of the conquest of disease and emotional disorder, marches forward on an imperial campaign that penetrates to the heart of the universe, and subjugates time itself. And who will say that art, especially if it is architecture or ballet or music, is moribund?

Why should the heart of man not be proud? And why, being proud, should he not create?

Especially so long as economy and the spirit of man is on the upbeat, as it manifestly is in America today.

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GLORY BE TO GOD FOR DAPPLED THINGS

An Autobiographical Story

DANNIE ABSE

JUNE the first was our day of peace. It came in that year with all sunshine and the windows open and the neighbor's radio. It was tennis players and the yellow seasick trams grinding down Cathedral Road. It was the end of a school day where we left our carved initials, hurt and momentous, in the wooden desk, and schoolteacher (old Knobble-knees) rubbing off chalk from the blackboard like a nasty day from the calendar.

"Mind how you cross the road," she said.

"Please, Miss Morgan," asked Philip, "can I have my yoyo back? I won't talk again during lessons."

Keith had asked me to his house for tea, for it was our day of peace, an interlude in our constant campaign of being mean to each other, of masterful vilification. We walked hardly together for we were enemies. Suddenly Keith said: "There'll be bananas and cream so you can leave as soon as you've eaten 'em." "I like bananas and cream," I said. Other people's houses have a strange smell. Keith Thomas's home was no exception and I was sniffing. "What's the matter?" Keith's mother asked. "Is there something burning?" I went very red when the others sniffed. They just stood there, Keith and his mother, heads cocked, drawing air through their nostrils. "I can't smell anything," she said. I could. Perhaps it was the odor of sin or the past remains of previous tenants. I ate bread and butter and jam and Welsh cakes, and Keith sniffed and sniffed louder and louder, quite ostentatiously I can tell you. "Blow your nose, Keith," said his mother. I tipped the tea over the tablecloth and grew redder. . . .

This was all a long time ago: I was ten years high and I lived in South Wales. There everything was different, more alive somehow. The landscape and the voices were dramatic and argumentative. Already I knew the chapels and the pubs and the billiard halls and the singing.

"How old's your mother?"

"Thirty."

"Mine's forty."

"Mine's fifty."

"Mine's sixty-three."

"Mine's ninety."

"Mine's hundred and ninety."

NEAR the White Wall I was born in a smoky house, boasting. I knew the paper flowers, the Sunday suits, the stuffed animals, and the brass, the clocks, and the ferns.

Always there was too much furniture in the room. Always there was too much noise and familiarity. Always there were visitors. Lovely it was.

But Porthcawl was the place with the long wind and the terror of the sea coming over the promenade with sloppy white paws. On Sundays, father would drive us down, plush and proud, scrubbed and avid, dodging in and out amongst the procession of cars that the seaside called like a magnet. And I would be in a race steering from the back seat. Over Tumble Down Dick and down Crack Hill. Past the Golden Mile and the green and green. Stop for bull's-eyes. Stop for weewee. Porthcawl was the place. Posh. The Figure of Eight and the Ghost Train. The slowest speedboats in the world and the thinnest Fat Lady. Come and See Minny She Creeps and She Crawls, She Walks on Her Belly Like a Reptile—Hey, Hey—Tanner a Time. Not to men-

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tion Sandy Beach and the parents shouting at the deaf children: "Don't swim out too far." "Stop that." "Dai, you'll get sick eating sand."

KEITH'S mother put a plate under the tablecloth.

"Never mind," she said to me.

"What are you blushing for?" asked Keith. "Look Ma, he's as red as a beetroot."

"Quiet, darling," said his mother.

"I thought we were going to have bananas and cream," I said.

Later the man of the house came in, ate, and said no word. Grumpy he was. My mother used to say that he had whisky instead of blood running through his body. It was true too; I could smell it through his mouth. Besides, lunchtime yesterday, I heard him and saw him come out of The Bull with One Leg. Drunk he was and shouting, "I am damned, we are damned. I know what sin is so I know what God is. We're damned, damned, damned." I stood in the street as the pub's doors swung behind a weeping Mr. Thomas who staggered tenderly into the sunlight. "Darro," he said, looking at me with spaniel eyes, "you're damned too, little one." And wobbly he walked down the road under the two o'clock sun. But now, in his own house, he said no word, looking at me without recognition though only yesterday lunchtime it was that he confided to me the terrible, the most unspeakable truth. "Come and sit down, Mr. Thomas," said his wife, so Keith and I went out into the garden. (Their garden is not as big as ours.)

"What's that?" I asked.

"Our washing machine," Keith said.

"Does it work?" I asked.

"Put your finger by 'ere." Keith said.

I did so and he turned the handle and my nail was crushed and I went home crying to mother. He was my enemy.

It was Friday night and we were Jewish. The two candles burning symbolized for me holiness and family unity. My mother could speak Welsh and Yiddish and English and Dad knew swear words as well. One of my big brothers would say the prayer and we would eat. My brothers' names were Wilfred and Leo. The meat was kosher. "Wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands. Comb your hair." I loved my brothers best.

IN THE schoolyard too they would dance around me:

Dan, Dan, the dirty old man
Washed his face in a frying pan
Combed his hair with a leg of the chair
Dan, Dan, the dirty old man.

"I'll do you in, Keith Thomas," I said furiously. That settled it. Keith and I would lead a procession of whooping boys into the lane and we would threaten each other, spit at each other, and finally swing our fists against the air until by chance one of us would get our face in the way and the fight would end. Fierce it was. Afterwards I would go into our garage so that I could weep alone.

I loved my brothers best. Leo was a Revolutionary. I already knew the "Red Flag" and *the* "Alphabet."

A stands for Armaments the Capitalists' pride.
B stands for Bolshie, the thorn in their side.

Oh election day was a holiday. I would go over the town looking for a Labor car. I couldn't find any, so I chased the Liberals instead, and insulted the big slick cars that wore the blue colors.

Vote, vote, vote for Johnny Williams
Kick old Whitey in the pants.

"What are you shouting for?" said my enemy Keith Thomas, leering at me. "Vote, vote, vote," I shouted. Keith pulled a penknife out of his pocket, unclasped it and tested the edge with his thumb. "It's sharp," he said casually. "You broke my fingernail," I said. An election car passed by. "Vote, vote, vote," I shouted. "Quiet," ordered Keith, and he once more tested the edge of his knife ominously. "You coward," I said, "fight like a Great Britain." The street was empty. A cat slept on the sunlit doorway.

"Shut up, you podgy Jewboy," said Keith.

"Podgy son of a whisky man," I said.

"I'll slit your throat," said Keith.

"I'll bash you on the nose," I retaliated.

"Shut up, you podgy Jewboy," said Keith.

"Podgy son of a whisky man," I said.

Keith slowly came towards me with his penknife ready.

"Fight like a Great Britain," I said.

Round the far corner ambled Dirty-Face pushing a pram, his dog following behind.

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"Gosh," I said, "there's Dirty-Face."

We both hesitated. Then we ran away. We were both afraid of Dirty-Face. In the park I heard Keith shouting, "Podgy Jewboy. Podgy Jewboy. Podgy Jewboy." I walked home quickly to ask Wilfred to buy me a penknife.

This was all a long time ago: I was ten years high and I lived in South Wales. I was not to play with Dirty-Face, or go down the Docks, or make noises in my belly when visitors came. I was to tie up my shoelaces, be kind to the cat, and wash. But there were more "don'ts" than "do's."

And through all this my mother kissed me.

But later Keith Thomas became my greatest friend, for he with his parents moved to the next street, the other side of the lane. Keith's father would pass our house at night after the pubs closed, shouting:

"We're damned, the whole world is damned." Mother used to say, "His poor wife, what she has to put up with, and her with a weak heart and swelling of the ankles. All his doing, *his*. Thank God, that's one thing your father doesn't do." "His wife's condition is nothing to do with the drink," Wilfred would say, who was a medical student. "Mrs. Thomas had rheumatic fever when she was a child." "Don't tell me," my mother would reply. "If that's the sort of diagnosis you're going to make when you're a doctor your father is pouring money down the drain." "What sort of a future has little Keith with a father like that?" mother would go on. Later in the night I would wake up and listen to Mr. Thomas swimming home in the dark street outside. Once I crept out of bed to look out of the window. Mr. Thomas was clinging to the lamppost and another man was playing an accordion. The accordion player was singing: "She was a good girl until I took her to a dance, she was a good girl but then she had her first romance"—and tilting towards the moon, Mr. Thomas in his bowler hat was shouting above the accordion and the singing, "Christ is come but I am damned."

Keith and I used to play hide-and-seek in the nearby churchyard, our laughter resounding all loveliness amongst the somber stone angels. We played cricket in the stretched summer lanes, we fished for minnows in the stream and became cowboys and Indians amongst the bushes and trees of the park. (I was always an Indian because Leo had told me cowboys were Imperialists.)

One day Keith's mother, only forty-four years of age, lay gasping propped up in her bed with one side of her face and one side of her body paralyzed. Her eyes were pulled over so that she was forever looking towards her right where normally Mr. Thomas slept. She couldn't speak they said, though she could hear everything. The doctor reported that she had a large thrombosis in her brain. The following morning at three o'clock she died. That day the blinds were drawn in Keith's house. Neighbors stood outside their front gates, whispering. Incredulously, maybe for as long as two minutes, each person thought of his own death and in their hearts it was five to three in the morning. "She was a good lady, Mrs. Thomas," they said. Others said: "The poor boy." And there was a sudden indignant anger against Mr. Thomas. Mr. Thomas had been a brilliant architect at one time, of a good family and fortunate in that he had a good education. He could have worked for himself instead of for Tanner & Son. Now he was always afraid of losing his job because of the drink. Poor Blod, she lay there so quiet, so still with her eyes still turned looking to see if he had come to bed. "Blodwyn fach," he said hopelessly, "it was good at the beginning, wasn't it? Remember before Keith was born. I didn't mean harm, Blodwyn." She still looked to the right in silence. Who had come to live in her? he thought. "She was a pretty," he said aloud to the doctor as if trying to defend her ugliness in death. "Come away now," answered Doctor Meadows.

I went with my mother, to give flowers to Mr. Thomas, and he ushered us into their front room (their best room). Mr. Thomas was dressed in black and he received my mother's condolences quietly. I didn't understand the slow punctuated conversation that followed. But I remember Keith's father remark, "I swear to God, I shan't take another glass till I die. On Blodwyn's body I swear it." And he meant it too. I observed a finger of sunlight pointing through a crack in the window blind, its fingernail scratching a round blob of sun on the tawdry deaf

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carpet. Outside an "El Dorado" man rang his bicycle bell: "Ice cream," it tinkled, "ice cream." The dust danced, the dust climbed up and down the shaft of sunlight, the dust settled on Mr. Thomas's black suit. The piano lid was closed, a coffin of music. And then I heard perhaps what I was waiting for: I heard Keith Thomas whimpering upstairs. Keith's father said with dignity: "Thank you for the flowers."

That night when Mr. Thomas came through the road drunk and screaming despite his holy resolution, the whole street locked their doors and pulled down the blinds. The children could hear him from their bedrooms. "Blodwyn my pretty, it wasn't me at all. Speak, Blodwyn fach, speak. I know, I know, I know," he yelled. Only Stokes joined him in the street. Stokes who used to go round the town with placards on his back, placards which read: CHRIST DIED FOR YOUR SINS on one side, and REPENT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE on the other. "Kneel and pray," begged the benign fanatic, "kneel and pray." "I'm damned," shouted Mr. Thomas. "I'm damned, it's too late." But in the end they both knelt in the street under the full moon, one praying and the other crying out, "Blodwyn fach," between his terrible oaths.

It was only Uncle Isidore. . . . I don't think ing on his hands. "No more school till Monday," said Sidney. It was silly to come home from school tea-time with the lamp-posts lit to keep away the ghosts. It was that cold: in the middle of the road, steam rose from a drain. We stood there, looking downwards watching the steam rising. "It's the devil smoking his pipe," I said.

Adam and Eve and Pinchme
Went down to the river to bathe.
Adam and Eve got drownded
Who do you think was saved?

A policeman came round the corner and we ran and we ran and we ran.

"You don't believe in Christmas, do you?" Sidney said to me.

"What's it like to be Jewish?" asked Philip.

"'S all right," I said.

"What's the difference?" demanded Philip.

"They puts 'ats on when they pray, we takes them off," Sidney said.

"It's more than that, their blood's different," said Philip, "makes their noses grow."

"Megan's coming round our house this evening," I interrupted, making a face. Sidney and I didn't like girls because they wore knickers and Megan was especially silly. Lots of things were silly. Girls were silly, Miss Morgan our schoolmistress was silly, washing behind the ears was silly, going to bed early was silly. Now Philip was silly, because he didn't know what it was like to be Jewish. It wasn't anything really, except on Saturdays. We walked down the street wishing for snow and letting our breath fly from our mouths like ectoplasm. Soon it would be Christmas holidays, and presents and parties. The shops were crowded with voices. We pressed our noses against the window-panes, breathed, and wrote our names with our fingers on the misted glass. "Leo loves Megan," I wrote. It was all cotton wool in the windows, and the smell of tangerine peel, and a man with a long white beard.

"There's daft, in' it?" said Philip. "Look, Father Xmas!"

"Where do flies go in the wintertime?" asked Sidney suddenly and we all laughed sharing a secret.

When I arrived home, my brother Leo was squeezing a blackhead from his forehead; then he combed his hair.

"Megan Davies," I shouted at him, "Megan Davies!"

"Do your homework," he said.

"Who loves Megan Davies?" I cried. He hit me harder than he meant for I fell against the wall and a bruise came up like an egg on my head.

"Put some butter on it," my brother said, "and stop crying."

"Bloody, bloody, bloody," I screamed.

"Now then, enough of that," he thundered. But the front doorbell rang and he thought it was Megan, so I was given a penny to shut up.

It was only Uncle Isidore . . . I don't think I've told you about him. I'd like to tell you. Of course, he's dead now, but I remember him quite well. He's become a sort of symbol really. You know, my parents still live in Wales, but we children have grown up and left home—as much, that is, as any-

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body can ever leave home. Anyway, when old Daffyd Morgan comes round the house at Cardiff these days, he and my parents get to talk about the kids.

"And what about Wilfred, your eldest son?" Old Morgan asks.

"All right," says my father; "not just an ordinary doctor but a psychiatrist."

"Fancy," says Morgan. "Wilfred not just an ordinary doctor! Now my son Ianto, 'e 'ad the gift do you know, just like his mother before she caught pneumonia, before she was . . . exterminated, God rest her soul."

"And Leo, my second son," interrupts my father.

"Ah yes Leo, Leo, there's a boy for you," smiles Morgan. "A boy in a million. Very spiritual. And a credit to you, goes to chapel, I mean synagogue, regular, I understand."

"A solicitor, Mr. Morgan, very clever."

"Yes, very clever. Fancy, a solicitor! A very spiritual solicitor, I should think. Pays, I always think, to go to chapel—I mean synagogue. The connections do you know? Apart of course as a remedy for the spirit. What about your third son, the youngest?"

"Our third son, Daffyd Morgan," says my mother, "is no good. Won't do any work."

"Just like Uncle Isidore," exclaim my father and mother in unison:

"Fancy," says Morgan. "Now my son Ianto. . . ."

Uncle Isidore wasn't exactly an uncle. Nobody knew his exact relationship to the family; but my parents called him "Uncle" and my cousins called him "Uncle" and my uncles called him "Uncle." He used to visit our home regularly once a week, to collect his half a crown and eat a bit of supper. He went around all my relations' houses to receive a silver coin and grumble. It wasn't even as if he were a religious man. He just lived that way and the rest of the time he would read at Cardiff Central Library, or return to his dingy bed-sitting room and play his violin. Not that he was a competent musician. On the contrary, he would scrape the easy bits and whistle the difficult phrases. That was his philosophy and his life. He always looked as if he needed a good wash, a shave, and a haircut. Uncle Isidore would pick me up and rub his face against my cheek. "Like a baby's bottom," he used to say to me. He smelt of dirt and tobacco. Eventually he died of kidney trouble following an enlarged prostate gland. That's all I know about him. It doesn't seem very much. Uncle Isidore was just an oldish untidy man, a sort of amateur beggar, who wouldn't work but read in the Reference Library and forever played his violin. It used to disturb people that he didn't have a reason for living. Daffyd Morgan would lecture him, beginning with the inevitable sentence: "The purpose of life is . . ." and end up his discourse hopelessly saying: "The Jews, bach, are generally an industrious people."

Nobody listened when Uncle Isidore played, even the cat would rush for the door. So we say, he had no purpose in life. He was contemptible, a rogue, an outlaw. I never cried when Uncle Isidore died. Nobody did. There was a small funeral and my father and my uncles gave some conscience money for his burial. I remember asking what a prostate gland was.

When the front doorbell rang, Leo gave me a penny to shut up. He thought it was Megan Davies, but it was only Uncle Isidore.

"Workers of the world unite," grinned my uncle at my brother.

"You should talk," Leo said.

"Leo hit me," I said.

"What?" cried Uncle. "That is coercion. We can't allow coercion."

"But he gave me a penny," I said.

"Then you're rich, lad," he exclaimed, and looked so dismal that I offered him the coin.

"That's all right, lad," he said to me. "I'll live without it."

"Go on," I insisted. "Mama says you need it. Take it."

"Ah," said Uncle, "your mama is so right. She's a gentlewoman she is, and do you know, lad, she used to be the prettiest girl in South Wales—Jewess or *goy*."

"She still is," I said big-eyed.

"No, no," said Uncle. "Now she's the most beautiful." Yes, Uncle Isidore had the soul of a gentleman. The doorbell rang again.

"Megan Davies, Megan Davies!" I screamed.

Leo rushed to the door and I heard their voices together, and then the door slammed. I was left in the house alone with Uncle

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Isidore. He kicked the fire and the flames spat out of the coal, curling round his black boot. Mother would return soon and cook the dinner. Philip was silly asking me what it was like to be Jewish. Uncle Isidore stared into the fire with tremendous sadness. It was silent in the room but for the ticking of the mantelpiece clock. Suddenly he turned his head toward the window.

"You could stand there," he said vehemently, "all your life and look out." And then he stared into the fire again. I walked over to the window, almost on tiptoe, afraid to disturb him. I gazed out. Down the road I could see snow falling under the lamppost, and above, between the clouds, a few stars in the cold sky.

"Uncle, what's it like to be Jewish all your life?" I asked.

"'S all right," he said, and for a moment we smiled at each other.

MY MOTHER seemed very angry. She kept on talking and talking.

"Not in front of the *kinder*," my father pleaded.

"Where're you going?" she barked at Leo.

"Out," he said.

"Out where?"

"I'm eighteen," he replied obstinately.

"You're not too old to put across my knee," father said.

"I'm nearly eleven," I said.

"I'm going to a political meeting, if you must know," Leo lied.

"That girl, that *shikse*. I'll throw a bucket of water over her, that'll cool her, my lad."

"Which girl, mother?" asked Leo innocently.

"Megan Davies, Megan Davies," I cried joyfully.

"You be quiet," my mother said.

"My God," said Leo. "What sort of house is this? There's no privacy at all."

"I'll give you privacy."

"Hell, Dad—can't I even. . . ."

"Who do you think you're speaking to?" It ended up with my father chasing Leo round the table, swearing at him. As Leo went around the table for the third time, he grabbed the bread knife. I stood behind my mother in the corner. Leo's face was white, my father's purple almost.

"The neighbors, what will the neighbors say?" shouted my mother.

Leo took the opportunity to dash for the hall, and in a flash the front door had banged behind him. We remained there very quiet and still, but for my father who was breathing heavily.

"You wait till he comes in," said my father. "I've had enough of his nonsense."

There was a curious noise from the front door. Leo had pushed the bread knife through the letter box. . . . Later when my elder brother Wilfred came in he asked what had happened. My father leaned over the fire silently and mother went on with her knitting. My brother Wilfred was a medical student at the Cardiff Royal Infirmary.

"What's the matter?" he repeated.

"Leo chased Dad with a bread knife and tried to kill him," I volunteered. "I think you ought to operate."

"Go to bed," said my mother.

"There's blood on the floor," I continued. "They tried to murder each other. Dad swore."

"Go to bed," repeated my mother. "It's after your bedtime."

"Will Wilfred tell me a story?"

"Yes. Up you go."

"Good night Mama, good night Dada, good night table, good night walls, good night. . . ."

"Up you go."

And up I went, piggy-back, up the stairs one by one on Wilfred's back; and I went to bed with the story of David and Goliath, of Jews and Philistines, and my brother's gentle, responsible voice.

SATURDAY mornings I used to climb into my mother's bed and lie between my parents and ask questions:

"Who made the world?"

"God."

"Who made God?"

When Mom would go and prepare breakfast I would lie on the warm part where she had been. My father snored with his mouth ajar. His face was turned towards me and I could see the individual pores in the skin over his nose clearly. His skin was like a used dartboard. He opened one eye fishily and saw me upside down. "What are you looking at?" he said sleepily. "Your nose," I said. He closed his eyes again. The wallpaper in the bedroom was pinkish, so

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warm and kindly. He opened his left eye once more: "What's wrong with my nose?" he asked. "Nothing," I said, but he turned over and I gazed at the back of his head. "You're going bald a bit on the crown," I remarked. Father grunted, but he soon moved again, this time on to his back. "You have quite a prominent Adam's apple," I said. "Be quiet," he said. "You have hair growing in your ears," I continued. He pulled the bedclothes over his head. "What are you doing that for?" I shouted.

Saturday was a grand day for there was no school . . . not until Monday. Saturday mornings Leo would often read me poetry from a little blue book.

"The one about the Merman, our kid."

"No. And don't call me our kid."

"The one about the Merman, and call once yet before you go, Marg-aret, Marg-aret."

My brother sat up in his bed so I lay down.

"This is by Gerard Manley Hopkins," he said.

"Is he a revolutionary?" I asked.

"Well . . . in a way."

"You always read revolutionaries," I said.

Outside it was raining. They say that Manchester is rainy. Have you ever been to Cardiff? It's the rainiest city in the world. Wilfred told me a story about that: When Noah looked out from his Ark so many years ago, he patted the nearest giraffe and said: Soon it will be dry everywhere except of course in Cardiff. In 1934, one Saturday morning it was rain over my home town and my brother Leo was reading me poetry from a little blue book: "Glory be to God for dappled things," he read. Mama was downstairs cooking breakfast; in the front bedroom Dad lay back snoring, his arm dangling over the side of the bed near an empty teacup. Keith's mother was dead in the wet graveyard and Uncle Isidore was still alive reading Karl Marx in the Public Library.

When breakfast was over, I had to go to the synagogue, rain or shine, for it was Saturday morning. I used to sit next to Bernard and Simon. We would wear our skullcaps and whisper to each other beneath the chant of the Hebrew prayer. A man with a spade-shaped beard would stutter and mutter at us now and then and again. "Shush, shush," his eyes said. These times we would stare at the prayer book and giggle. It seemed natural that the prayer book wasn't in English, but written and told in some strange language one read from right to left, some mystical language one couldn't understand. Obviously one couldn't speak to God in everyday English. We stood up when the congregation stood up and sat down when they sat down. The men were segregated from the women lest they should be distracted from their spiritual commerce with God. The women prayed upstairs nearer to heaven; the men downstairs nearer to hell. The sermon would begin and I would stare at the red globe that burned the never-failing oil. The Reverend Aaronowich, a man with an enormous face, gave the sermon. Usually his tone was melancholy. Every New Year, Rosh Hashanah, he would begin his speech, raising his hands, eyes round, mournfully direct: "Another year has passed . . . another nail . . . in the coffin."

However, this Saturday morning in 1934, the Reverend Aaronowich was almost gay. I stopped staring at the red globe and ignored the scrubbings and scratching of Simon and Bernard. He spoke in English, with a Russian and Welsh accent, throwing in a bit of Yiddish when his vocabulary failed him. I think I could understand what he was saying. I believe he proclaimed that it was an honor to be alive, good to breathe fresh air, miraculous to be able to see the blue sky and the green grass; that health was our most important benediction and that one should never say "no" to the earth. (Also, that the congregation should as Jews avoid ostentatiousness). Never to despair, for when one felt dirty inside or soiled or dissatisfied one only had to gaze at the grandeur of the windswept skies or at the pure wonder of landscapes—one only had to remember the beauty of human relationships, the gentleness and humor of the family, the awe and tenderness when a young man looks upon his betrothed—all things of the earth, of the whole of life, its comedy, its tragedy, its lovely endeavor and its profound consummation—and I understood this for only that morning my brother Leo had read me from a little blue book words that sounded like "Glory be to God for dappled things"—though then I didn't know what

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"dappled" meant. And the Reverend Aaronowich spoke such beautiful things in such a broken accent that his voice became sweet and sonorous and his huge masklike face rich, ruffled, handsome.

AFTERWARDS there was nothing to do but to stare at the red globe again, as the congregation offered thanks to God. In that red globe the oil of Jewish history burnt, steadily, devotedly. Or was it blood? Blood of the ghettos of Eastern Europe. My brother Wilfred said a world flickered in that globe: the red wounds of Abel, the ginger hair on the back of the hands of Esau, the crimson-threaded coat of Joseph, the scarlet strings of David's harp, the blood-stained sword of Judas Maccabeus—David, Samson, Solomon, Job, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, my brother said lived in that globe. Gosh.

The service seemed interminable, the swaying men, the blue and white *talleisim* around their heads, the little black *yarmelkes,* the musty-smelling prayer books, the wailing cry of the Reverend Aaronowich, the fusty smell of Sabbaths centuries old. Thousands of years of faith leaned with the men as they leaned. Their naked faces showed history plainly. As they murmured their long incantations I saw in their large dark eyes that infinite, that mute animal sadness, as in the liquid eyes of fugitives everywhere. I was eleven years old then: I could not have named all of this but I knew it.

How different seemed the synagogue when empty. With people in it I felt safe —as if God were far away. I was wrong, of course, but that was how I felt. Once I entered the synagogue on a weekday, when no one was about. It was almost dark inside: the light glimmered through the stained windows, the red globe burnt outside the Ark in which were kept the scrolls of the Torah. The darkness had weight but the weight had stillness. It was so silent that I tiptoed. I was an intruder in the House of God. I was afraid. I wanted to run out, escape. Supposing God rose out from one of the corners, from the stillness, from the silence, from the dark. I thought I heard a motion from the other side of the synagogue. My heart turned over beating fast. Were there not footsteps coming towards me? He was behind me, I knew it, I was afraid. I ran out from the silence, from the dark, into the glittering sunshine and the loud street. I didn't want to see the face of God.

WHEN the service was over we walked the three of us into the late morning rain of a Saturday in 1934, and Sabbath or no Sabbath we boarded a tram. We held our pennies tight and tried to look away when the conductor shouted: "Any more fares, please?" It was to no purpose: we bought the yellow penny tickets and looked at their numbers. "I've got a seven on my ticket," I said. That was lucky. And the tram lurched down St. Mary's Street. "There he is, there he is," shouted Simon. We poked our heads through the window and the wind and the rain blessed our faces. Sure enough, there he stood, as usual opposite the Castle, selling papers.

"Paper Sir?. . . . Thankyou Sir."

"Paper Lady?. . . . Thankyou Lady."

"Paper Sir?. . . . Thankyou Sir."

"Paper Lady?. . . . Thankyou Lady."

"Paper Sir?. . . . Paper Sir?. . . . PAPER SIR?. . . . Bastard!"

"Bastard, bastard," we yelled.

He smiled back at us. "You little bastards," he grinned. In Queen Street, an exminer played an accordion, a tombstone in one of his lungs. The music soared plaintively, insistently across the rainy street: give, give, give, give, give. The traffic lights changed to green—the orange reflection rubbed off the wet surface of the road and a blue-green smudge usurped its blurred place. And the traffic passed on, passed on. The rain, thin and delicate, lost from the damp sky, sullenly fell forever. A car back-fired. Still as the tram blindly hurled its way towards Newport Road, in the distance like a frail echo I imagined the accordion music, its sad dark melodies of give and give and give and give.

"Bastard." I liked that word. I used it on my brother Wilfred: "You big bastard," I said affectionately. Astonished he made me promise not to speak it again. So I looked it up in a dictionary.

We sat down to eat: Leo reading the *News Chronicle,* and Wilfred and my mother chatting. The meal was good. Cold Meat and Pickled Onions and Chips. A meal with shape to it see. Saturday. Cardiff. Rain. Glory be to God for dappled things.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

GITTLESON, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH

How Goodly Are Thy Tabernacles . . .

S. T. HECHT

AT A Men's Club meeting a fortnight or so before our Holy Days, I had occasion to inquire after Gittleson our *shammes* and learned that the poor fellow was sick.

"Since when?" said I.

"Last week," said one. "Maybe longer," said another.

This got my dander up. Let one of your rich men crawl into a sickbed, and the whole town buzzes. Fruit baskets. Flowers. Get-well cards. The rabbi, mindful who butters the rabbinical bread, cancels engagements. His finger is among the first on the doorbell. And not only once, if you please! And when death strikes! Ben Nathan's mother recently was gathered up for her eternal reward, and my wife, who inscribes those memorial tree certificates for the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemes) in Israel, had a full day's work. "What a gimmick!" said Abe Klein, no respecter of persons, when he met me on my way to the post office with the load of envelopes. "The rich croak and trees grow in Jerusalem!"

"But when poor old Gittleson—" I got a few choice words to this effect off my chest at the meeting.

"Mr. Waxman," said good man Epstein, still our *shul* president. "Seeing how you feeling, I'm appointing you shall visit brother Gittleson and wish him he shall recover from all of us."

I had half a mind to say that "from all of us" poor Gittleson would never recover.

Now any Jew will tell you that just before New Year is no time for a shammes to get sick. Not only does he have to rise before dawn for Selihot. (A six o'clock Mass is a cinch.) He's got to clean the entire synagogue—from top to bottom as we say. Our Gittleson, moreover, builds a *succah,* with his own hands. It's mostly for himself, I agree, but it's a job! Himself selects the freshest evergreens. Buys the palmiest palm branch for the synagogue. Rustles up willows that grew by a brook, and finds us a citron with an unbroken stem—a true *pitum*—and a flawless complexion. What an array of holidays we've got in the fall of the year—it's like Christmas, Easter, and the Fourth of July bundled together: not counting Selihot, a test for early risers, there are Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Hoshanah Rabba, Shemini Atzeret, and topping it off, Simchas Torah!

For a shammes, the amount of preparation is staggering. Of course, the rabbi could pitch in and help. He could. But it's beneath his calling. This new one we've got—we trade 'em in every year or so in Reedville—has had his head stuffed, wherever he comes from, with notions as to what is and what is not befitting for the rabbinate to engage in. If we asked him to do a little something on the side we'd lose him even before he had taken his shoes off, so to speak. I declare, better your rabbi than your shammes in bed at this crucial season of the year. . . .

S. T. HECHT, our correspondent from Reedville, N. J., which lies west of the Hudson and not far from Hackensack, reports once again on the life of that far from tranquil community, where young and old struggle over which symbols and practices of the ancient faith should be observed on New Jersey soil. This time, it is a question of a *succah*. Mr. Hecht teaches in a Newark high school and has written for COMMENTARY about Reedville a number of times during the past year and a half.

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I HAD never ventured into Gittleson's home, and only once had I been at his door. Paying the sick call, I discovered that he was not so poor as I thought. He lives in a double-decker shack with himself on the upper story. From this vantage he looks out on the world and down on his tenant. He's a landlord! Not only does the ground floor yield a better rent; besides he can't stand anybody walking on top of him. To his wife's complaints that she finds it hard to climb the stairs, he answers that after he's dead she can "moof." He's his own janitor (or, if you will, his own shammes). He can't stand the Italian family under him; if rents weren't frozen, believe me he'd send them packing. Their alien (*chazerishe*) cooking, he complained, seeps up through the walls and into his nostrils.

As to his duties toward our synagogue and our religion, there it was with him as with Jehovah—his foot could not be moved. Question Gittleson, even in the slightest degree, on matters pertaining to our ritual, which, alas, he performs with utmost punctilio, and he answers, "*Shtayt in die Toyreh* —Torah commands us!" And no use asking for chapter and verse. Gittleson has a mean tongue. Even his own good Fegele trembles as he watches the precise second for the lighting of the candles.

"Who are you?" she whispered to me, partially opening the door when I appeared.

On Friday night, when she covers her eyes with both her hands and softly repeats, "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," blessing the candles, all earthly woes fall away from her. She's your true *tsadaykeste*, the image of holiness, pouring out her prayers for each of her grandchildren, her sons and daughters, and for her beloved husband, who is sick *nebech*. "Merciful One, send him a cure!" Image of my mother, and all our mothers! Pure was thy life, unsullied by greed. Thou gavest me the fullest measure of thy poverty and all the handicaps of thy believing heart, making me simple in a world full of cunning. If prayers were riches and learning were gold we'd all ride in Cadillacs, mother mine!

I had a time persuading her to let me in.

"Don't you remember?" I said, recalling for her how on a Sunday morning when Gittleson had overslept I had come for the key to the shul.

"Oh! Yeh, yeh!"

She smiled, her face a little wrinkled, a little soiled, as she released the door another inch.

"What ails him?" I said, speaking Yiddish.

"God knows!"

Mark her answer! The doctor comes and the doctor looks, he knocks on his back and he knocks on his front. "Give a cough, Mr. Gittleson!" Ahhugh! "Another cough!" Ahhugh! Without God's help, what good is a doctor?

She'd go in, she said, to see if he was awake.

"If he's sleeping I wouldn't daring to wake him up."

Quietly she left me.

A white oilcloth covered the square table. A wooden bread board with bread and a knife were on top, and on an ancient gas stove was a huge blue kettle, vapor reporting it was ready for tea. Two simple kitchen chairs and an old rocker completed the furnishings of the small kitchen, and I was reminded of what Greenspan once said when we passed Kaufman's Furniture Store, elegant with luxuries. "I'm thanking God there is so much I ain't needing."

GITTLESON had it different, of course, at our shul. I've seen him on cold evenings (dutifully he reports on Friday nights, *minyan* or no *minyan*) wrapped up to his ears in a wool muffler, in his greenish vintage overcoat and its dog-eared lapels turned up. First thing, he shoots up the steam register. Through some *ad hoc* dispensation it was no sin for him to fire up the synagogue on the Sabbath, paralleling no doubt the Halachic exemption for those who used to prepare the sacrifices in the Temple. Heaven forbid! It was not for his own personal comfort! There *might* be a minyan! Nearest the furnace he has himself a roomy wooden armchair padded to his own proportions. Into this he lowers himself with nice care and with both hands begins to tap his pockets for his glasses. One temple is bound with surgical tape, and one lens is cracked.

"Why don't you buy new glasses, Gittleson?"

"For what I'm needing it?"

Good eyesight, he says, he still has, not failing to praise the Almighty. "Only when to reading is I need them."

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'True, true! For the *mikvah*, ritual baths, glasses are a burden."

He looks quizzically at me. The Almighty, as you know, has not granted him a sense of humor.

If before a Men's Club meeting you've made it your business to remind him, then the chairs will be set out and dusted. But it's not beyond him, not at all, to suggest that it wouldn't harm you to do a little work on your own.

"The extra-size is good for you!"

The upstairs of the shul is fairly clean, but don't appear in a light gray suit! You'll trace the dear imprint of your proportions on the mahogany. Your neighbor will dust you off. "Oy! Is this a shammes!" But what can you do? He came with the building! You could no more disown your grandfather than inform Gittleson that he's through. A rabbi—Ah! To some it's positively a pleasure to give their rabbi the gate. But not our Gittleson!

But let's give credit where it's due. On the platform and at the ark, everything is without blemish. The president's chair may creak somewhat—but is Gittleson a carpenter? One of the coiled springs has a tendency to slip, sharply reminding its occupant that the world is founded on flesh. But is Gittleson an upholsterer? "To fixing will cost like a new one!" So let the flesh be mortified. The rear benches are always cluttered with torn prayer books, orphaned *talleisim*, and nondescript *yarmelkes*—but who ever uses the rear benches? For the rest, everything is as it should be . . . so you understand, I trust, why I said it was a near catastrophe when Gittleson fell ill.

Understand, too, that our precious Gittleson had expanded the boundaries of his already vast empire to take in what in the olden days must have been within the suzerainty of the *gabay*—your elder or trustee. He silenced the talkers during prayer sessions; rich and poor alike, but especially the poor. He maintained a strict public observance of all Jewish rituals, and as a service to our community prior to our several holidays, he engaged in the retailing of religious merchandise. Came Chanukah and he had lights and menorahs. The Sisterhood contested for the rights to this concession. Gittleson won! For Passover he had *matzos* and Haggadahs. Mrs. Finkelstein, she of the little grocery with no husband and three children, wept that the bread was being stolen from her mouth. But on foot Gittleson delivered *matzos* at your door, for the same price. "Is a free country!" argued our Gittleson. "Then pay rent to the shul," countered Mrs. Finkelstein, "like I'm paying rent to the landlord!" But here, too, Gittleson won.

He also made announcements. Such Yiddish and English were never so wedded before. "Der *maylid*—time of the new moon—is falling out nexten *Donnershtig* [Thursday] *accurat* by five *azeyger* mit two minutes!" He also performed the penitential ritual known as *malkes*, though we had only one among us so extra-pious as to require his services. Our Reedville window cleaner, Mr. Saperstein, a nice little guy who wouldn't step on a cricket, appeared each year to take his lashings from Gittleson, after which Gittleson himself got down on his creaky old fours while Saperstein did the like for him. Two devout spirits on *erev* Yom Kippur alone in our quiet synagogue. The afternoon sun filters in through the stained glass windows, falls on the red velvet folds that shield the ark, lifts up the twin lions of Judah between which our Ten Commandments glow with new candescence. Contrite is the heart; sublimated the pure spirit. Can you hear the echoes of the lash sighing in our house of worship?

"Forgive us, we beseech Thee, O Father! We have sinned!"

They beat their breasts, fulfilling an ancient ritual, defying time and the accidents of place, doing in Reedville, N. J., as was done wherever God has sent us to suffer and to sing His praises.

WHEN Fegele at last reappeared, she said praised be God that her husband was not asleep and that he was very happy to hearing I had come. Also, she said, "A shammes, Mr. Waxman, is not made from iron."

I followed her through a shabby living room, entered a shade-drawn bedroom where on two mountainous pillows I came on the object of my pilgrimage. A yarmelke was on his gray head and a blanket that verged into a peak over his head enfolded his enfeebled frame. The birdlike nose and eyes turned toward me and his hand reached out, and when I broke into Yiddish, bringing

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him the best wishes of our Men's Club, he was really overcome.

"Go, go," he said to Fegele. "Make something."

"A little tea?" she inquired.

He pointed to his back.

"Is something I'm not knowing from what."

He told me that many years ago, on first coming to America, he had been a very strong man.

"I could bending iron."

He had been a tinsmith.

"You wouldn't believe maybe, Mr. Waxman, but I make a good living. But comes an accident. I'm falling off a roof."

"A roof! What kind of roof?"

"Any roof is bad to falling from. *Ay, ay, ay*. God punished me. I'm fixing a leak on a church."

"But that's so many years ago!"

"Is coming back the pain again."

"But not for the same sin."

"Who is knowing from such things? Is my back hurts."

His wife served tea and, in good Orthodox tradition, again disappeared. Gittleson asked what sort of cantor had we hired for the Holy Days, and it was plain to see how badly he missed the annual Men's Club meeting where we planned for the coming of the High Holy Days.

"Is the first time in twenty-seven years."

"With God's help," I offered, falling into the proper pious singsong, "you'll be with us next year."

"With God's help I'll being there this year," he corrected me.

"Better yet," I said, feeling chided.

He inquired who had been appointed to the several committees, and I assured him that everything was going forward in right good style.

"Can't be!" he flatly stated. Suspicious, he began to probe.

"Who choose the cantor?"

"Mr. Bilkowitz."

"From what is Bilkowitz knowing about cantors? Bilkowitz is a butcher, not even a *shochet,* and him they giving the job to choosing a cantor!"

To ease him of his anxieties I added to the Cantorial Committee our good friend Mr. Greenspan. That pleased him but still he was not satisfied.

"How much the cantor gonna get?"

"Three hundred dollars."

"Is a hundred more from last year!"

"Costs are on the up."

"Sure is on the up! Only not for the shammes. Him they paying the same!"

A just grievance, I was going to say to him, but was thrust out of my sympathies when he suddenly asked if rents in East Reedville had been decontrolled.

"Is a *mamzer* an Italyener lives under me and makes no difference how I'm trying, he will not paying a penny more!"

I UNDERSTOOD now why Gittleson's humble job had never reduced him in his own eyes. Who else but one capitalist could stand up to another capitalist like Barney Rossman? Ah, my dear brothers in poverty! All we need to make the whole world kin is a piece of property we can call our own.

"I shall paint him the rooms yet he wants. A coffin I'll paint him!"

With this off his chest, Gittleson returned to our synagogue affairs, but still in a fractious mood. He decried what the young were doing to our religion. As Jews, they were a worthless and profligate lot, if Jews they were at all, of which he had considerable doubt, and they were spending our shul moneys "left and right" for foolish things.

"Is a shul for dancing? Is a shul for wimmin shall come with naked arms and naked shoulders and the breasts so uncovered to tearing a man's eyes out from his head? Jews was given the Torah so we shall being a religious people and not like bums and tramps which gets drunk and is not remembering we is chosen by God to being a holy people."

He was referring, of course, to a masquerade ball, a bit on the undressy side, that our Mr. and Mrs. Club had tossed off to attract new members. Perhaps, I agreed, some had gone too far, but concerning the extravagance with shul moneys, I was happy to inform him that at our last meeting we had discussed ways and means of introducing some economies. "From which way?" he asked, and then I let slip that we were considering not to build a communal succah. As if jolted by a charge of dynamite under his bed, he sat up erect, and pushed aside one of his supporting pillows.

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"From where comes this?" he demanded.

I repeated that the idea was only being considered.

"There is a meeting on Thursday."

"From what day is today?"

I told him it was Tuesday.

"You shall doing me a favor, Mr. Waxman."

"Gladly," I said.

"From this meeting is very important I shall be there"; and he implored me to call for him on Thursday.

CAME Thursday night, and a miracle came to pass. I saw it and I speak of what mine own eyes beheld. Gittleson walked down the creaky steps. Gittleson got into my car and sat down beside me. Gittleson said with impatience, "So drive already," and I, servant of God and Gittleson, caused my aged car to convey us to the shul. I will allow that he did drag himself somewhat, and that his voice, in the face of his cronies, was quaky with emotion, but by the time our business meeting was called to order, Gittleson was his old self.

He sat in the rear dragging on a cigarette while the Cantorial Committee, in the shape of Mr. Bilkowitz, reported that a cantor had been hired. Mr. Bilkowitz received a round of applause and somebody cried, "*Mazel tov!*"

Then David Deitch arose, chairman of the Ritual Committee, and Gittleson scraped his chair forward and sat up, his lips tense and tight like a new buttonhole. Trust Brother Gittleson to know that if there's going to be any tampering, to look for David to do it. A regular *goy* without memory of a Jewish past or sentiment, a confused wretch who wants to be a Jew, alas, because there's nothing else for him to be, and in a small town like Reedville you've got to be something. David had nothing. Beards offended him. Once in a fit of anger he told me how revolted he was each time he had to wear a yarmelke. He couldn't stand the Litvak-twisted English of the East Reedvillers. "It's enough to ruin your own speech!" As chairman of the Ritual Committee, his secret hope, he once told me, was to force the old Jews out and to reform the rest of us. "It's so much more dignified."

He and his committee had several recommendations, David announced. They did not like the chatter during services, nor did he approve of the shouting of the prayers, one member against another as if they were in competition who should appear the holiest and the loudest. God could hear us just as well if we prayed in unison and quietly. There was no need for Mr. Gittleson, our shammes, to go strutting up and down the aisle making more noise than he suppressed.

"We recommend the appointment of ushers who will lead members of our congregation to pre-assigned seats. We also recommend that Mr. Gittleson be relieved of his extra duties during the Holy Days. The ushers will maintain order."

Gittleson's hands were shaking.

David continued.

"Due to the heavy drains on our treasury for repairs to our sidewalk, and due to the expense of repairing our side walls where the rain seeps in, and due to the anticipated increase in the cost of a cantor, we recommend in the interest of economy that no succah be built this year."

Up leaped Gittleson, defender of the faith.

"WHO IS SAYING SHALL BE NO SUCCAH?" His voice was a tower of rage. His eyes glared and his body trembled.

But David stood his ground, outglared the glaring Gittleson and asked him, while his own glasses trembled on his nose, why we needed a succah.

"What harvests are you reaping? What fruit are you gathering? The stores are open and we all go to work and there isn't a Jew here to celebrate the festival. We're not farmers. Why should we pretend to be what we're not and waste money for nothing? I don't see any sense to it."

"I WILL BUILDING IT!" shouted Gittleson. "I am building succahs from before you was born yet and I am building one as long as I'm living, and this year too, with God's help."

"And our money!" somebody yelled.

"You're a sick man," cried another.

"And you can't waiting to bury me!" he thundered in reply.

Turning to our chairman, Mr. Epstein, who sat through this and wondered why at the end of his term he shouldn't resign, Gittleson assaulted him with a lion's courage.

"Why you sitting there, Aaron, and saying nothing? For years we is doing like is

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right for Jews to doing. Why you letting these *goyim* they shall telling us what we shall doing or not doing?"

White with rage and shaking with the fury of his agitation, he pointed to all of us young ones who sat together in a body, and he shouted, "If God must depending on them, then will be *ays Yidishkayt und ays Gott*—both God and Israel will perish!"

We voted—always democracy—and it was overwhelmingly carried not to build a succah. The meeting exploded with an uproar. The old-timers moved off to one side, muttering threats and calling us an infamous lot; we, the so-called young, rejoiced in our victory. Regretfully I must record that although not exactly young myself any more, I had voted with the young.

IN THE car with Greenspan, driving him home, I sat very quietly at the wheel. Several times he asked me to speak my mind, and at last I confessed that I was feeling quite confused. In voting against the succah I had acted, I said, against my better self but solely to keep in the good graces of my contemporaries, so to speak. Greenspan looked at me sadly, if not with some pity, and explained that contemporaries they were indeed but not my spiritual kin.

"In you is moving something else, Mr. Waxman," and the words were barely out of him when a tide swept me out into the stretches of my orthodox past. O miserable me, doomed to a divided existence, fed by springs whose sources lie in the deepest clefts of my being but doomed to thirst and wander over the barren soil of Reedville, itself wandering between two worlds —one dead, the other powerless to be born.

"Ki vonu vocharto v'osonu kiddashto mikkol ho-ammim. . . ." My father's voice reciting the Kiddush in the succah. . . . "For thou hast chosen us and sanctified us from among all peoples. . . ." The wind blows fresh through the chinks of our succah. White candles wave their little flags, hearts of fire standing in liquid pools of paraffin that drips to the base of the glimmering candlesticks. See the faces in the shiny candlesticks! Distorted, crazy, comical! My father's face is long and thin and the beard is long. My sister's curls giggle in the light, and my own face is fat in the spread of the brass.

"Was not right for you, Mr. Waxman, to voting against a succah."

Kiddush is over. The *challah* is uncovered. A slice is carved. With a dab of honey how sweet to sweeten the New Year in.

"A succah, Mr. Waxman, is from the oldest things we having. In the Bible is Succoth mentioned more from any other holiday. From such things we cannot *afjoder* to throwing away. If is only one Jew and is wanting to eat in a succah, for him is our duty we shall build him one."

. . . "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth . . . *hammotzi lechem min ho-oretz. . . .*"

"In every which country, Mr. Waxman, where we running from our enemies we carrying with us the Torah. We building shuls; we keeping the Passover; we making a succah. Nothing, nothing important we is chopping off from our religion."

The aged car's engine chugged noisily on Reedville's quiet streets. The panel threw up a dim light. A faint glow from the forward lights fell on the black pavement. Shadows shrouded us, two Israelites in the womb of man's civilized contrivance, discussing the same things that our forebears did on the desert shores of long ago.

Not until I was ready to leave him did it suddenly occur to me that Greenspan himself had not voted for the succah. I asked him why and he broke into a smile.

"Is no use to angervate the young people."

"But what will Gittleson and Itzkowitz think—your friends?"

"Don't you worry yourself, Mr. Waxman. They knowing like I'm knowing that Gittleson will building a succah. Take mine word. Will be one."

WHEN the Holy Days and the festivals were over and October winds had descended on the yellow foliage and paved our Reedville streets with gold, there came the day of reckoning. In an agitated hand, Johnny Smith, our new treasurer, held up three bills. Who, he demanded to know, had been charging to the shul's account lumber in the amount of so much and so much from the Reedville Supply Company, evergreen branches from the Reedville Nurseries, Inc., and from Main Street Hardware, five pounds of assorted nails.

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In vain I looked for Gittleson. Arose Greenspan and said that these were bills for the succah.

"It was voted," cried Johnny, and he wanted to know if votes had any significance, and if the will of the majority was to be flouted and brushed aside.

Greenspan listened patiently, and when he arose, I felt that we were going to hear things. He agreed that it had been voted, and he agreed that a majority will was important.

"But you shall excuse me, Mr. Smith, if I'm saying you mixing up things. In government and politics is majority counts. But the Jewish religion you don't voting on. The Jewish religion is, and will be, and was never in the majority. We is a minority elected by God and what we learn to do, we doing."

"But ninety-two dollars!" cried our treasurer.

"Is a bargain," answered Greenspan.

"Then pay for it!" shouted David Deitch. "You enjoyed it!"

Never before had I seen Meyer Greenspan go white. His life's habit is to avoid anger.

"If I'm enjoying or not enjoying makes no difference, Mr. Deitch. The truth is that from this time I'm not enjoying the succah. First of all fell down Mr. Gittleson almost from the top of the succah and is still in bed a very sick man."

"God wants no mockeries!" shouted Johnny, who was a bit of a firebrand.

Greenspan paid him no attention.

"Second of all was raining all the time terrible and looks like is coming the floods from Noah's times all over again. I make Kiddush there only the first night."

"For that we gotta pay ninety-two bucks!" Deitch shouted.

Overcome with anger, it was with great effort that Greenspan turned to David.

"Mr. Deitch! Leave an old man, an old Jew from such as you not liking, to tell you something. Was people who giving their lives away so we can making Kiddush when we wants and when is needing and is required to do. You never hearing what means *Kiddush ha-Shem,* Mr. Deitch. Means, my friends," said he, turning away from Deitch and addressing all the young group, "means is a Jew making the highest sacrifice and is dying for his religion. Dies crying the *Shema,* Hear, O Israel! Dies singing the *Oleynu,* like died Jews when they defying the Crusaders and the Inquisition. In France in the Middle Ages we was put in a tower and there we was burned alive, but we singing the *Oleynu* and while the flames is crackling in the night our tormentors they is hearing this song, they hearing us while we dying still shouting our belief in God! When I am making Kiddush I am thinking from such things, Mr. Deitch, and even if is only one man in Reedville as wants a succah is our duty he shall having it, and is very cheap only ninety-two dollars, my friends."

O, the silence in our faces!

Greenspan's face was still pale, and I saw him laboring to still the beating of his heart.

Again I drove Greenspan home, and he told me that it was quite a fall Gittleson had had. He advised me to call on him, which I did the very next night.

HE BITTERLY complained of his lot. "Is no good to getting old and be poor, Mr. Waxman. Make money now, while is time yet, because later on nobody cares on you if you living or dying."

I assured him that he would be up and around soon enough.

"From your mouth to God's ears," he moaned, and then he had me sit down by his side.

"Leave me ask you something, Mr. Waxman. You a teacher and a man from which I'm liking. Please explain me. When I'm fixing the church roof and I'm falling down, from that I'm understanding. But when I'm building a succah and is almost finish, why shall God let me to falling down? From this, Mr. Waxman, is I'm very much puzzled."

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

PHILOSOPHY IN HEBREW CULTURE

Secular Wisdom and the Bible

SIMON DUBNOW

SIMON DUBNOW was one of the leading intellectual figures of East European Jewry from the last decade of the 19th century until his death, at the age of eighty-one, at the hands of the Nazis in Riga in December 1941. His major work was a full-length history of the Jewish people which was published in Russian in 1901, and which has been translated into German, Yiddish, and Hebrew. His *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* (3 volumes) was published by the Jewish Publication Society in this country. Dubnow was a nationalist but not a Zionist; he believed the Jewish people should be self-governing in all the spheres of cultural and religious life, as it had been in many stages of its exilic history.

This essay is reprinted from *Israel Argosy*, Spring 1953, published by the Youth and Hechalutz Department of the Zionist Organization. It has been translated by the editor of *Israel Argosy*, I. Halevy-Levin. Dubnow's "A New Conception of Jewish History" was published in English for the first time in these pages in March 1946.

IT IS not my purpose here to develop any new theory upon a theme to which not a little study has already been devoted, but merely to express a view, which may, I believe, lead to certain definite conclusions. Probably other scholars who have preceded me have arrived at similar conclusions, but they may have preferred not to make them public for fear of impinging upon accepted opinions. Perhaps, in essence, the merit of the present essay resides in the attempt to simplify the issue involved.

It is generally accepted that three ancient peoples contributed to the shaping of European civilization: the Jews, who gave the world the idea of monotheism and of moral religion; the Greeks—philosophy and the arts; and the Romans—jurisprudence and the art of government. Renan underlines this view —which is subscribed to by Jewish scholars— in his introduction to *L'histoire d'Israel.*

There is, however, room for closer study in what degree this view is justified. In this essay we shall confine ourselves to the question of philosophy. Is ancient Jewish literature exclusively religious in character and devoid of all trace of philosophy or "wisdom"? The word "philosophy," in the Greek from which it is derived, denotes "love of wisdom." A philosopher, accordingly, is a lover of wisdom and knowledge, a seeker after the answer to the riddle of the universe, to the enigma of life, beyond the sphere of religious faith. The Greek sages followed diverse routes in their quest for truth. The earliest schools engaged in the study of cosmology and the nature of matter, enunciating the Law of Four Elements—fire, water, spirit, earth. Plato delved deeply into the sources of consciousness. Aristotle encompassed all questions of physics and metaphysics, bringing them under the rule of reason. They were followed by the moral philosophers—the Stoics, the Epicureans, the Skeptics and, finally, the Theosophists, who reconciled philosophy with religious faith under the influence of Judaism and the early Christians (Philo of Alexandria and the Neo-Platonists).

What do we find in ancient Jewish literature? To reply adequately to this we must first of all define "faith" and "philosophy."

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From a purely subjective standpoint any man who has found truth and spiritual content in religion is a believer. The philosopher, on the other hand, is one who seeks truth through rational investigation or observation, because he finds faith in ancestral tradition inadequate. "Wisdom" (*chochma*), the term applied to science and philosophy in ancient Judaism, was the aide of faith (according to the *Agada*). At times *chochma* assists in elucidating religious tenets; not infrequently it opposes or diminishes the validity of these tenets. Examples of both functions can be found in the fragments of the literature of *chochma* which have been included in the canon of the Bible: in the Books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and to some extent even, in certain Psalms. I wish to stress that these must be regarded as fragments, for indubitably the majority of the books of *chochma* were not included in the Bible at the final redaction but were condemned to suppression and for that reason have been irretrievably lost. After much deliberation and misgiving it was nevertheless resolved to include in the Writings the Books of Job and Proverbs, and even Ecclesiastes "which they thought to suppress" (*Shabbat* 30:72; *Megillah* 7:71; *Mishnah, Eduyot* and *Yadaim*). We may assume that other works of this nature expressing views contrary to tradition were condemned and suppressed.

A number of scholars, among them Nachman Krochmal, have drawn attention to an allusion in early literature indicating that the third collection of books in the Bible, the Writings, was formerly known as *Sifrei Chochma* (Books of Wisdom). But at the time of the final redaction of the Bible other books and scrolls (*megillot*) of a disparate character were included, all under the common title of *Ketuvim*—in other words "general literature." Obviously the intention was to stress that these works ranked lower, in terms of sanctity, than the Torah and the Prophets. In view of the fact that these suppressed Books of Wisdom have been lost, we must perforce rest content with what has survived. We shall examine these to establish the philosophical method common to both Israel and the Gentiles, as well as that specifically Jewish in character.

In the three Books of Wisdom included in the Writings we can clearly discern three distinct phases of philosophical development. The authors of the Proverbs who speak in the language of wisdom generally (in the first eight chapters) seek to reconcile it with religious faith:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (1:7);
Yea, if thou call for understanding . . .
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord (2:3-5).

Wisdom reigns supreme throughout the creation, for with it God created the world:

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth (3:19);
Doth not wisdom call . . . .
The Lord made me as the beginning of his way . . . .
When He established the heavens I was there;
When He set a circle on the face of the deep . . .
When He appointed the foundations of the earth (Chap. 8).

The entire system of ethics of this collection of Proverbs is based upon the premise that wisdom and ethics are mutually related and opposed to folly and vice:

To know wisdom and instruction . . .
To receive the discipline of wisdom,
Justice, and right, and equity (1:2,3).

Thus the interconnection between wisdom, faith, and ethics (instruction) is the salient characteristic of this initial sphere of philosophical speculation.

In the second phase we have the contradiction between simple faith and rational ethics. The author of the Book of Job rebels in the name of reason and ethics against faith because he has not found the "justice and law" which are bound up with the very essence of faith in life, but on the contrary he has witnessed the righteous suffering while the wicked prosper. Suffering man remonstrates with the wrathful Divinity, crying out in anger,

And how can man be just with God . . . .
Who will say unto Him, "What doest thou?" . . .
Whom, though I were righteous yet I would not answer . . . .

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And if of justice, who will appoint me a time? . . .
He destroyeth the innocent and the wicked (Chap. 9).

Here I discern a bitter irony upon the maxim *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* in Job's verses,

Whence then cometh wisdom? . . .
Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living . . . .
God understandeth the way thereof,
And he knoweth the place thereof . . . .
And unto man He said:
"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom" (Chap. 28).

But man does not accept this last principle because he cannot discover wisdom in the conduct of the universe (*"it is hid from the eye of all living"*) and accordingly he may ask: How reconcile it with faith, with the fear of God? Job's companions reply to him with weak argument and God himself answers out of the storm, silencing the rebel with the admonition that the ways of the Creator of the Universe must not be called into question. Job's declamation is silenced but the contradictions are not reconciled.

Man submitting to the rebuke of his Creator pours forth his complaint in the Psalms. He murmurs against the evil and violence that dominate the world, the peace of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous, and the fate of man in his brief span of existence. *"Yet is their pride but labor and sorrow."* But here the believer gains the ascendancy over the skeptic in his understanding that without faith there is no tranquility of soul. The believer reproves the agnostic.

The fool hath said in his heart: "There is no God" . . . .
The Lord looked forth from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there were any man of understanding, that did seek after God (Psalms 14, 53).

Was the number of "fools" who denied the existence of God indeed so great, and so few the number of the "men of understanding" that did seek after God (perhaps in the sense that they sought after God despite the fact that they were men of understanding)? At all events it is abundantly clear that even in ancient Israel skeptics and agnostics were not wanting. What these extremists sought is clear from Ecclesiastes.

In this book *chochma* attains its third phase. Man can find support for his soul neither in faith nor in reason and cries out in bitter despair.

In much wisdom is much vexation, and *All is vanity.* The Creator does not govern the universe but all revolves without change, *for there is nothing new under the sun.* Not Divine Providence but Fate or Chance (*tyche* in the system of the Greek philosophers) reigns supreme.

For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust and all return to dust. Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth? (3:19-21).

Here there is an utter refutation of the idea that man is the crowning achievement of creation.

Then I saw [in the beginning] *that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness* [and in the end] . . . . *And I also perceived that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart: "As it happeneth to the fool, so will it happen even to me; and why was I then more wise?" Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity* (2:13-15).

This phase is already beyond philosophy, the unbelief that comes in the wake of that same wisdom which the authors of the Book of Proverbs so exalted to the status of God's associate in the work of creation. Instead of Job's great protest at the disturbance of the laws of ethics and justice in the conduct of the universe, Ecclesiastes arrives at the gloomy conclusion that such is the way of the world and nought can be done to alter it.

But I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter (4:1).

. . . there are righteous men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the

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wicked; again, there are wicked to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous (8:14).

. . . there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked (9:2).

. . . bread [is not] *to the wise nor yet riches to men of understanding . . . but time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them* (9:11-12).

All this was uttered by a man who, according to his own testimony, in the beginning applied his heart

To seek and search out by wisdom all things that are done under heaven . . .

And whose heart

had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

But if one skeptic had already advanced beyond the bounds of wisdom, still he testifies to the many remaining within its borders and continuing to study books of science and philosophy. These books have not survived because, after being condemned to suppression, they were lost. The Book of Ecclesiastes, however, "they sought to suppress" but did not do so. Why? Because it confounds philosophic verities, although at the same time it denies religious truths. The Scribes and the Pharisees who were hostile to philosophy condoned the religious heresy of Ecclesiastes because he was their ally in refuting the claims of *chochma.* Was it not Ecclesiastes who said

Make not thyself overwise; why shouldst thou destroy thyself . . . .

Moreover, in order to make the suspected work conform, the Scribes interpolated not only single epigrams in various chapters, but appended an entire concluding chapter composed according to the ancient maxim, "Know what thou shouldst reply to an unbeliever," which atones for all the sins of the heretical author. Even in the penultimate chapter we find an editorial interpolation into the epigrams of the author who said:

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth;
And let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,
And walk in the ways of thy heart,
And in the sight of thine eyes (11:9) . . . .

(to confound the express commandment of the Torah: *That ye go not about after your own heart and your own eyes*). The editor therefore introduced the warning in the line immediately following:

But know thou that for all these things,
God will bring thee into judgment.

The author then says:

Therefore remove vexation from thy heart
And put away evil from flesh

and the editor replies,

For childhood and youth are vanity.

The concluding chapter is particularly noteworthy, for it is entirely the reply of a believer to a heretic. The believer continues from the previous chapter.

Remember then thy Creator in the days of thy youth

(to counter, *"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth"*)

Before the evil days come
And the years draw nigh when thou shalt say
I have no pleasure in them.

and he proceeds to paint a grim picture of human suffering in old age.

Because man goeth to his long home
. . . And the dust returneth to the earth as it was
And the spirit returneth unto God who gave it.

(An explicit protest against the statement of the skeptic who said: *Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward?*)

Finally the anonymous editor expresses his opinion of the book in general: *Kohelet sought to find out words of delight* (but did not succeed).

The end of the matter, all having been heard; fear God and keep His command-

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ments; for this is the whole man. For God shall bring every work into the judgment, covering every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

In view of this admonition, the book, which is full of heretical opinions, was endorsed and permitted to enter the canon of the Writings and to be included in the Holy Writ though it ranks lower. In the Talmud we are told, "The Sages sought to suppress the Book of Ecclesiastes because its words contradict each other. Why then did they not suppress it? Because it begins with words of Torah and ends with words of Torah."

According to our theory this statement must be amended: The book was not condemned to be suppressed because of the contradictions it embodies, these contradictions having been introduced by those believers who interpolated the "words of Torah" to counter the words of heresy, thus converting it into a sort of dialogue, similar to that in the Book of Job.

Our conclusions must accordingly be (a) ancient Jewish literature comprised not only religious works but secular works too, and the books of *chochma* or philosophical inquiry which it included were not infrequently contrary to the spirit of religious tradition; (b) books which could not be revised in the religious spirit were suppressed and subsequently lost. Thus only the books of *chochma* presented in the form of a dialogue between a believer and an inquirer, or in which the believer's glosses upon the inquirer's arguments are appended and the inquiring mind submits to the dominant faith (in keeping with the dictum: *The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God*) were included in the writings; (c) from the fragments of this secular literature preserved in the *Ketuvim* we are enabled to form an estimate of the extent of the controversy between believers and free inquirers over questions of universal import. The more ingenuous readers of later generations remained unconscious of these contradictions because the freethinking opinions expressed were submerged beneath the multitude of authoritative glosses, so much so that only close observers could distinguish between the sacred and the secular.

To what extent did this ancient Jewish literature of *chochma* influence contemporary Jewish and non-Jewish thought, especially through the agency of the Greek translation of the Bible? There can be no doubt whatever that the influence was mutual. Originally Jewish thought was influenced by the Greeks as is evident from the Book of Ecclesiastes. Such views were commonly held in the Hellenistic and Judaistic spheres which met in that period in Hither Asia and in Alexandria. Jewish literature in the Greek language and especially in the Septuagint constituted the intellectual bridge enabling this meeting, and towards the end of the period Philo of Alexandria emerges with a mission to reconcile the two world concepts. The influence exerted by Philo on early Christianity, which was born of the marriage, is beyond all doubt.

However, the influence of the fragments of the Books of Wisdom incorporated in the Writings is not restricted in time or space, like the majority of other books of the Bible, but is endowed with eternal significance. Let the Jobs of all generations and climes say what they felt and feel when they read the Book of that Ancient Complainer. Let the sons of Kohelet even in modern generations, the Fausts and the Hamlets wheresoever they may be, all those who despair not only of faith but of philosophy and science, declare why study of this work of extreme skepticism rouses such a storm in their breasts.

Many works of this kind were rejected and placed beyond the confines of the Holy Writ, but there can be no doubt that they too were illumined by the spark of holiness which we attribute to the surviving literature of *chochma*. All philosophy that is disinterested, which seeks truth and justice and is not sophistic, is inspired with sanctity. He who seeks faith is of a status equal to that of a believer, insofar as he truly believes in the possibility of achieving truth. And even he who despairs of this hope in a spirit of deep sorrow and genuine longing for a solution of the universe may enter the company of the righteous of his generation.

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ON THE HORIZON

THE NEW FAITH OF THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Saviors for Lost Sheep

ROBERT S. BRUSTEIN

THE publishers of *The Saturday Evening Post Stories: 1952* (Random House) tell us that it was produced for no other purpose than to illustrate the "infinite variety" of "one of America's best-loved magazines"—and to entertain. These are modest aims, and when the stories are adept and professional—as they are in the comic tales—they make very good entertainment indeed. Apart from their one occasional affectation, a love affair with the tradition of folk humor which slightly mars their spontaneity, the stories in the comic genre are uniformly amusing. Furthermore, they derive their humor from legitimate comic sources: from the outrageous gap between the real and the imagined, and from misunderstanding. In Paul Gallico's "The Secret Ingredient," a French chef creates a chicken dish with such magnificent flavor that he earns both a high Michelin rating and the boundless admiration of his entire household—the "secret ingredient," however, turns out to be nothing more than catnip. In "The Scandal at Mulford Inn," we are entertained with a comedy of mistaken identity occasioned, like the errors in Chaucer's "Reeve's Tale," by a great many people in one bed. Edwin McCourt's "Dance for the Devil" is a comic ghost story in which an irascible chunk of ectoplasm is less occupied with spooking than with manufacturing bootleg whiskey.

Unfortunately, however, only these three stories offer pure entertainment. Most of the others—romances, fantasies, "serious" matter—range from good to horrid, but they are rarely amusing. If indeed these stories were chosen to illustrate the *Post's* "infinite variety," then there is little variety to be found other than in variations of plot and locale. It is a law of popular art that a work cannot possibly be appealing unless it evokes a large response; and since, in the catalogue of large responses, the only alternative to laughter seems to be tears, the non-comic authors lay on like butchers—I cannot remember such a concentrated assault on the same emotion since *The Fireside Book of Dog Stories*.

But we expect this also. None of these things really differentiates a *Post* story from, say, a story in *Collier's*—neither the excess of sentimentality nor the tired writing (more tired in stories by reputable authors), nor even the rather surprising fact that most of the stories are variations on a single theme. What gives *Saturday Evening Post* fiction its particular quality is rather the special *kind* of theme to which most of the stories adhere, and the fact that this theme is emphatically moral and even religious.

THE theme is adoption. A man has been forced to put his dog to death because the animal has developed cataracts. After a certain length of time the dog appears again. Just at the point when the man is beginning

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THE short stories in "America's best-loved magazine," ROBERT S. BRUSTEIN finds, have displayed lately a new—or, rather, renewed—preoccupation with religion, and a religion of a peculiarly American quality. Mr. Brustein, a graduate of Amherst and Columbia, will spend next year at the University of Nottingham in England on a Fulbright fellowship. He was born in Brooklyn in 1927; this is his first published writing.

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to assume that supernatural forces have intervened on his behalf he discovers that the newcomer is not really his dog at all but an identical twin donated by a homeless waif who "couldn't stand to see a grown man cry." In gratitude, the man calls up the governor (with whom he is on intimate terms) and, with a remarkable lack of legal complication, the boy is adopted.

In this synopsis of "The Boy Who Gave His Dog Away" we can discern the outlines of the theme: a powerful person experiences a difficulty which is resolved through the generous impulse of someone weaker; by his own considerable power or through mysterious intimacy with "higher-ups," the stronger then rewards the weaker, and the weaker is subsequently adopted. Though the adoptions are often actual legal arrangements between adult and child, they are more commonly not so literal. In relations between the sexes, for example, the gruff superior male offers the female, after she has shown herself worthy, shelter from the world and its brutalities. "Oh Kevin," cries the heroine of "Not What She Wanted," "tell me—tell me I'm safe home." In "Desperate Journey," a stag which has been freed from a trap by a child watches over the father of its benefactor, climactically "adopting" him by "accidentally" pulling him from danger. A wooden carousel horse, in the fantasy "The After-Hours Visitor," adopts a dying child and takes him on an imaginary trip around the world. A fleet commander (in "The Bloodstained Beach") adopts a sailor who has made a heroic attempt to save the commander's son in Korea and who once, in civilian life, had fixed the commander's car. A colonel and a captain (and later a whole regiment) adopt a Negro who has proven himself brave though "The Dumbest Man in the Army."

It is the weaker character—the adoptee—who is the central hero with whom the reader is meant to identify, and his face is featureless so that the reader can substitute his own. Though the adoptee is virtuous, he may sometimes appear, through misunderstanding, to have undesirable qualities. The boy in "The Boy Who Gave His Dog Away" seems to be a "bad one" who runs away from orphanages, and his adoption is therefore in jeopardy, but we later discover he has been running away only to be near his dog. In "End of the Line," a romance between a gruffly sentimental bus driver and a girl is endangered by the fact that the girl seems to have stolen a pocketbook and to have come from a reformatory—but this is only a misunderstanding which the bus driver clears up through his friendship with a police chief.

Since the authors seem to assume a correspondence between the adoptee and the reader, there must be a similar assumed correspondence between what the hero ultimately acquires and what the reader presently desires. It is therefore especially significant that the highest reward the authors will bestow on their heroes is not money or fame or power, as we might expect, but the security of a cloistered and protected life under the guardianship of a higher authority. And just as there could have been no Garden of Eden without a personally implicated God, so can there be no effective security, in these stories, without the benevolent adopter to give it meaning and efficacy. Indeed the resemblance of the adopters to the Creator is often striking—they are "gruff" and "severe," and endowed with the ability to reward virtue swiftly and without complications; in short, they are gods that walk like men, preventing evil before it occurs and insuring that good will triumph with uninterrupted regularity.

Companion species to the gods that walk like men are the great number of sentient animals and inanimate objects with ethical standards which crowd these pages, sometimes assuming the role of the guardian-father (like the previously mentioned stag in "Desperate Journey") but more often serving to impress faith and morality on a wavering hero. A ship "commits suicide" by sinking (in Nicholas Monsarrat's "The Last Days of M.G.B. 1087") because its captain is smuggling contraband and dope aboard; in Conrad Richter's "The Marriage That Couldn't Succeed," a blind mathematics teacher (mathematics is equated with atheism!) grows into faith when a wounded pigeon comes home to roost, signalizing the return of her missing, similarly wounded husband; the carousel horse in "The After-Hours Visitor" makes incisive comment on Communism. Thus Nature has none of the blind fortuity we usually attribute to it—it

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is Eden minus its serpent, heedful, benevolent, and planned along lines more coincident with the reader's hopes. ("They were all the one family," writes the author of "Desperate Journey," "man and beast.")

IF THE *Post* was once an emporium of entertainment, we must judge from these stories that it now sees itself as a citadel of faith, and even—such is its intensity of tone—faith's last outpost. The most striking qualities of the stories—euphemism, wish-thinking, a sentient Nature, a hovering grace—reveal the quality of the religion that the magazine preaches: it is a religion that must, above all, operate, and operate quickly, a religion in which God must work in totally unmysterious ways. Like the adoptee hero, this religion is featureless—or rather dogmaless—and permits each reader to substitute the faith of his choice; but the constant insistence on the religious call is no less clear. From this we may assume not so much a radical new change in the tendencies of our popular culture as an attempt to return to older forms, more specifically to the comforting religiosity of the 19th century, a significant indication of the direction in which the fantasies of at least some Americans are tending.

ATTEMPTED DIALOGUE WITH MY GRANDFATHER

MORTIMER SLAIMAN

HE SPEAKS first:
"I am sweet and careless with rosewater
pomades slick the thick waves of my
widow's peak
I love the gusto of my mustache,
My stance is not meek.

"In my pocket is a Nevada dollar
a studded stickpin specks my vest
and at my arm's crook levels
a beaver's best."

So he spoke to me, this daguerreotype
typical of his day, in a self-righteous
bumbling, frightening, coarsifying way;
and I anxiously hurried him out of focus,
held the album off at arm's length,
and asked him before he faded
wherein lay his strength?

I asked him as a forebear
I asked that man that him
who had journeyed far from Bucharest
how to become Diamond Jim.

He replied:
"I am sweet and careless with rosewater. . . .
But no, you won't listen
You think I lived to cross the ocean
and win my place among the shooting
stars. . . .
My feet were planted
That's all I'll say."

Gay and foolish, how tell this ghost
that I want my soul to be haunted
by the essence of his boast
that I want to reach back undaunted
that I would right every wrong ever flaunted
if I had but a fraction of his strength?

How tell a ghost, in the language of our
dream
that his seeds would not be what they seem?

MORTIMER SLAIMAN died last month at the age of thirty, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was working towards a doctorate in clinical psychology at Harvard. His first published short story, "No Greater Love," appeared in COMMENTARY July 1950.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

JEWISH-GENTILE INTERMARRIAGE: FACTS AND TRENDS

A Sociologist Summarizes Recent Studies

HERSHEL SHANKS

AMERICAN Jews have always been keenly interested in their rate of intermarriage, perhaps precisely because it has been such a difficult statistic to come by—coupled with the fact that it is the common assumption that a high rate of intermarriage spells the end of Judaism, and with it the heritage and way of life that Judaism represents.

This writer believes that the American Jewish intermarriage rate can now be reliably estimated at between 5 and 10 per cent. That is, for every 100 married couples in which either one or both parties are Jews, between 5 and 10 couples are intermarriages. (This figure is, of course, higher than the proportion of the *individual* intermarried Jews in the total number of spouses. That proportion would be between 2.6 and 5.6 per cent.)

SINCE "religion" is recorded neither on marriage licenses nor in the federal census, and consequently we cannot simply count the number of intermarriages in the country, more than usual interest must be given to the way in which this estimate has been arrived at.

The only direct evidence we have had in recent years on intermarriage in this country has come from individual community surveys. However, it is difficult to get information on intermarried people even in this way. It may be, for example, that the persons most likely to intermarry would also most likely be "missed" in a survey of the Jewish population of a community. It is, nevertheless, from these scattered and obscure, published and unpublished studies that we get our first notion of the American Jewish intermarriage rate.

The table below is a sampling of over half of the available community studies, selected because they seem superior from the point of view of survey methodology, and because they give a representative regional cross-section.*

Intermarriage rate (per cent of intermarriages of all marriages involving Jews)

Des Moines, Iowa	1949	8
Indianapolis, Ind.	1941	12†
New Haven, Conn.	1950	8
New London, Conn.	1938	5
Stamford, Conn.	1938	7
Trenton, N. J.	1937	1

Allowing for the intermarried couples who

*These studies represent the work of the following sociologists in the order of presentation: John E. Mayer, Clyde V. Kiser and Paul K. Whelpton, Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, Bessie Bloom Wessel, Samuel Koenig, and Sophia M. Robison.

†There are good reasons to think this is probably an overestimate. In this study, the wife had to be forty-four years of age or younger; and both partners had to be *native* whites.

A RECENT study by the author as well as a collation of obscure and sometimes unpublished material enables HERSHEL SHANKS to establish what is perhaps the most reliable estimate that has yet been published of Jewish intermarriage in America. He also discusses the attitude of Jewish youth toward intermarriage and the problems it poses to them, as well as the puzzle which the American Jewish intermarriage rate presents to the sociologist. Mr. Shanks, a native of Sharon, Pennsylvania, holds degrees from Haverford College and Columbia University; and is now a student at Harvard Law School. His unpublished researches on intermarriage are in both the Haverford and Columbia libraries. This is his first article for COMMENTARY.

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were "missed," these studies would indicate an intermarriage rate of approximately 10 per cent in these cities. But are we justified in making a generalization about American Jews when we have studied only the behavior of Jews in a few scattered American cities?

This is not simply an academic question. To illustrate, we might look at the intermarriage rate of Catholics in this country which was reported in a study of New Haven (August B. Hollingshead, "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates," *American Sociological Review,* October 1950), one of the cities for which we have Jewish rates.

The rate of Catholic mixed marriage may be estimated from the marriage records which each Catholic diocese keeps. The national rate, as taken from these records, is reliably reported as at least 30 per cent (John L. Thomas, "The Factor of Religion in the Selection of Marriage Mates," *American Sociological Review,* August 1951). This is a minimum figure because it includes only those marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics which are performed by a priest. The number of Catholic intermarriages performed by members of other clergy as well as by civil officials would undoubtedly increase this figure. Yet the New Haven study reports a Catholic intermarriage rate of only 12 per cent for New Haven. By way of contrast with the New Haven figures, we might cite a Catholic mixed marriage rate of 40 per cent for the entire state of Connecticut, 9 per cent in the El Paso diocese, and 70 per cent for the Savannah-Atlanta diocese. To what extent do similar variations occur between different areas in Jewish intermarriage?

THE figures we have come from several smaller communities in different areas of the country, and because the estimates of the intermarriage rate in these communities do not vary greatly, we have some assurance that these studies adequately represent the comparatively smaller communities. But, according to the latest estimates of Jewish population (*American Jewish Yearbook,* 1948) over 70 per cent of American Jews live in cities of 500,000 or more. Fully half are in three cities: New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. What is the rate of Jewish intermarriage in the larger cities?

The only indication we have had so far on this point is an old study made by Julius Drachsler, who examined over 100,000 marriage certificates in New York City ranging over a five-year period from 1908 to 1912 (*Democracy and Assimilation,* New York, 1920). Since there is no indication of religion on these records, Drachsler attempted to detect intermarriages by four criteria: the names of the spouses, the names of the witnesses, the names of the officiating officers, and the country of birth of the spouses and their parents. By this method, Drachsler found a Jewish-Gentile intermarriage rate for New York City of 1.17 per cent. But this has little meaning for us today, not only because of his doubtful methodology (we have no idea how many intermarriages escaped his critical eye), but also because the social situation has so radically changed in over forty years. Forty years ago most of Drachsler's subjects were foreign-born, or were the sons and daughters of parents who emigrated to this country in middle age. Assimilation (or acculturation) had not proceeded to the degree it has today.

We may ask if the intermarriage rates of European cities or the intermarriage rates for Canadian Jews, both of which are reliably known, can give us any information as to whether or not we may find a higher intermarriage rate in the large metropolitan areas of this country than in the smaller cities. Here we are presented with conflicting viewpoints. Arthur Ruppin (*The Jewish Fate and Future,* Macmillan, 1940) asserts on the basis of a study of intermarriage rates for several large cities in Europe: "Mixed marriages are most common in the large town where the influence of religion and of difference in social status is least, and where social intercourse between Jews and non-Jews is easiest." In *Canada's Jews* (Canadian Jewish Congress, 1939), on the other hand, Louis Rosenberg reports: "The larger the Jewish population and the greater the percentage of Jews to the total population, the smaller the rate of intermarriage."

One can argue indefinitely whether America follows the European pattern, where there was more intermarriage in the big cities than in the small, or the Canadian, where the situation is reversed. Those who believe the intermarriage rate is higher in the metropolitan areas point to the anonymity of the city into which an intermarried couple may escape without suffering the burden of community disapproval. As further evidence, they point to the fact that the proportion of synagogue membership is lower in the metropolitan areas, a factor which undoubtedly contributes to or reflects condi-

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tions that contribute to increased intermarriage. The secular culture of the city, the lack of internal, individual compulsion to abide by community standards, the haziness of these standards, are all cited as support for the argument that intermarriage is running rampant among the big Jewish settlements in our large cities.

But, equally convincing arguments can be used to support the opposite proposition. After all, it is in the metropolitan areas that Jews tend to cluster solidly in one neighborhood. Where there are so many more Jews, it is easier for a Jew to find a Jewish mate. Etc., etc.

IT IS financially out of the question to ascertain directly the actual proportion of intermarriages in a large city whose population runs into the millions, as we have done for smaller cities. To draw a small representative sample, as is done in public opinion work, is also a rather expensive undertaking. There are additional objections to measuring such a personal matter through the use of short, unintensive, public opinion interviews.

One way of handling the problem is to find an indirect indicator of the phenomenon under question, one which can be measured. Though it would be difficult to find an indicator from which we could make an actual estimate of the rate of intermarriage in large metropolitan areas, it is possible to find indicators by which we can *compare* the intermarriage rate of metropolitan areas with the rate in smaller cities, the latter rate being, as I have said, fairly accurately known.

In a study recently completed by the writer at Columbia University, two such indicators were chosen in order to determine whether Jews from metropolitan areas were more or less likely to intermarry than Jews from smaller communities. The indicators used in this study, the results of which are being published for the first time in this article, were the amount of inter-dating between Jews and non-Jews, and the frequency of "going steady" between Jews and non-Jews. "Going steady," a peculiarly American relationship, is often a prelude to marriage, although not so often at earlier ages, but indicates at any rate a willingness to enter a somewhat serious and, at least for the "going steady" period, exclusive dating relationship. It would seem reasonable to assume that the more inter-dating and the more "going steady" relationships we discover between Jews and non-Jews, the more intermarriage there will be.

The Jewish students at Columbia and Barnard Colleges were divided into large-towners and small-towners, the line of division being a home-town population of 500,000. Naturally most of the large-towners came from the largest city with the greatest proportion of Jews, New York.

Considering only the freshmen (the small-towners of whom were least affected by living in a large city, since they had been there barely three months), it was found that among the small-towners 62 per cent had dated a Gentile within the past six months, while this was true for only 32 per cent of the large-towners for the same period. Almost twice as many people from small towns had dated non-Jews as people from large towns. A comparison of the two groups in terms of "going steady" is even more striking. Fully 21 per cent of the small-towners had "gone steady" with non-Jews, while this was the case with only 4 per cent of the large-towners.*

With so much more inter-dating and "going steady" with non-Jews among the small-towners it would seem reasonable to conclude that there is also a higher intermarriage rate in the smaller communities. This seems striking evidence that the intermarriage rate in the large metropolitan areas *is* lower than it is in the smaller communities; by exactly how much, we cannot of course say. However, these figures suggest that the 10 per cent figure for smaller communities is higher than we will find in the big cities where the great majority of Jews live, and the total national figure must consequently be smaller.

THESE figures present an unusual situation to the sociologist. If they are true the

*The differences between the small-towners and the large-towners decrease with each year of additional education, but the direction is persistent. This decrease in difference between the two groups is accounted for by the fact that the more time the small-towners spend in a large metropolis, the more nearly their attitudes and behavior correspond to the large-town natives.

The sample of the study included 536 students, which is approximately 2/5 of the Jewish population of Columbia and Barnard Colleges. The return of nearly 600 questionnaires of 1200 sent out is an extremely high response. The distribution of large-towners to small-towners was 2 to 1. Any bias which may have entered the sample would not affect a comparison of the large-towners and small-towners.

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American Jew defies all the sociologists' generalizations concerning the close relationship between acculturation, assimilation, and intermarriage. As against the fear and consternation of many Jewish leaders at American Jewish intermarriage, the sociologist must be amazed at the low rate of intermarriage in the face of an otherwise high degree of assimilation (in the sense of being integrated into American life).

For the American Jew is a highly assimilated individual in almost every respect except that of intermarriage. He dresses, talks, acts, and thinks like most other Americans in analagous social positions. His attitudes are the same, as are his values, and, apart from the label Jew, we have a difficult time distinguishing him from most other Americans. The American Jew is hardly more "ethnic" in his mores than the American Quaker, the Irish American, or the American Roman Catholic. Certainly there are differences (for the most part unstudied), but the similarities far outweigh them.

Yet this high degree of assimilation notwithstanding, the American Jew continues to marry other Jews. And through this endogamy—marriage within his own group—he is able to maintain the identity of his proportionally very small group.

Romanzo Adams, who until his death in 1942 was a leader in the field of the sociology of intermarriage, felt that if intermarriage between two groups were to be effectively prohibited, the types of social contact that lead to intermarriage must also be prohibited. He went on to point out that this kind of prohibition gives rise to a whole code of social relations which, in the case of Jews and Gentiles, would require separate restaurants, hotels, colleges, clubs, schools, as well as separation in the remainder of the vast areas of social relations. But, as we all know, this is simply not the case—and American Jews continue to intermarry.

On the other hand, the evidence from other highly acculturated Jewish communities supports the sociologists' reasonable enough supposition that the lesser forms of assimilation must lead in a large number of cases to that final index of assimilation, intermarriage.

In the countries of Western Europe (for many of which we have government statistics) there were extremely high ratios of intermarriage before the war. In the cities, the assimilation of the Jew was most pronounced, and the rate of intermarriage for these cities was in accordance with the degree of assimilation. The following figures from Ruppin suggest how extensive intermarriage was among the relatively assimilated Jews of Central and Western Europe.

Intermarriage rate (per cent of intermarriages of all marriages involving Jews)

Vienna	1932	25
Budapest	1929	28
Amsterdam	1934	28
Prague	1933	45
Berlin	1933	45
Copenhagen	1900-1905	48
Trieste	1927	71

WHAT then are the prospects for the future of intermarriage in America? Will American Jews maintain their unique pattern of high acculturation and low intermarriage, or, like the West European Jews before them, develop a high intermarriage rate? Unfortunately, our few statistics can tell us almost nothing about such a question.

In order to tell whether we have a relatively stable relationship here between assimilation and intermarriage, or whether we may expect a sharp rise in the future, we would need to have information on intermarriage rates year by year, city by city.* If, with this information, we observed no trend over the past twenty or thirty years toward increased intermarriage, we could say with some assurance that we are dealing with a stable situation.

However, our statistics give only an over-all picture of intermarriage as of one particular date. It may well be that in a city with a rate of 5 per cent, most of the intermarriages which make up this 5 per cent took place in the last five or ten years. In this case, if we looked at the intermarriage rate for only those recent years, the percentage of intermarriages would be much higher. Or it may be that in future years, we will look back on the present high degree of assimilation as almost-due notes to be cashed shortly for intermarriage greenbacks.

Because we lack the scientific evidence needed to make a justifiable prediction, we

*The two indications of trends we have are for New Haven and Des Moines. In New Haven there has been little change since 1930. In Des Moines the rate jumped from 4 per cent in 1937 to 8 per cent in 1950. But it would be foolhardy to make any more inclusive generalizations from only two observations.

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might do well to look more closely at the study of Jewish college students referred to above.

This study measured the attitudes of a group of Jewish youth toward intermarriage by a method based on the use of many questions (33 in this case) and the computing for each individual of a score on a scale of favorableness and unfavorableness toward intermarriage. Fully 35 per cent of the students express a favorable attitude toward intermarriage; 43 per cent express a neutral attitude; only 22 per cent express an attitude in opposition to intermarriage. It is hard to evaluate these figures in isolation. However, it is revealing that as the students grow older and receive more education their attitude toward intermarriage becomes more favorable. While among the freshmen and the sixteen- and seventeen-year olds, 29 per cent express a favorable attitude toward intermarriage, this figure rises until, among the seniors and those twenty-one years old and over, 46 per cent express a favorable attitude. Correspondingly those who express an attitude in opposition to intermarriage decreases from 26 per cent among the freshmen to 12 per cent among the seniors.

Of course, the expression of a favorable attitude toward intermarriage does not mean that an individual will actually intermarry.

Parental objection in particular, we find, is cited by many of those favorable to intermarriage as a powerful obstacle. Thus one finds among those rated as favoring intermarriage (that is, seeing no good reason against it) many comments like: "I have no opposition to intermarriage for myself or anyone else, but my parents object violently to any mention of it. That is the only thing that would discourage me from entering into it." Or: "I could not intermarry while my parents or close relatives are alive. However, I see nothing wrong in intermarriage. . . ." (The same parental deterrent would presumably operate on the non-Jewish partner.)

Yet, as we have already indicated, we do not have here a situation where opinion is quite divorced from action. Forty-one per cent of the students in the study had dated a Gentile within the past six months; 9 per cent had "gone steady" with a Gentile. (If all those who "went steady" with non-Jews actually married a non-Jew, the intermarriage rate would be 18 per cent.)

The boys show a tendency to inter-date and to "go steady" with Gentiles more as they become older and receive more education. The percentage who have inter-dated within the six months preceding the collection of the information jumps from 34 per cent among the freshmen to 56 per cent among the seniors. With the girls this is not so. They show no signs of an increase in either inter-dating or "going steady" with Gentiles as they climb the educational and chronological ladder. This is as we might have expected since almost all reports on Jewish intermarriage show Jewish men intermarrying more than Jewish women.

What can we conclude from this study? Although it gives evidence of a high degree of assimilation of the young Jew into American life in terms of thinking and social relations (84 per cent of the students had at least one close Gentile friend), the fact that only 9 per cent have entered a serious relationship with a non-Jew suggests that the precarious balance between assimilation and intermarriage seems to be maintaining itself or is only slightly bending. This is all the more true when we realize that the full force of community sanctions and parental objections is not felt at the "going steady" stage of a relationship or in the college atmosphere. However, the on-the-whole favorable or neutral attitude toward intermarriage suggests that the actual brakes on intermarriage stem from community disapproval and parental objection, rather than from the individual's convictions.*

THIS study of Jewish youth raises one last problem. It is the problem of being led to the waters but forbidden to drink. We have encouraged the cultural and social contacts which lead to intermarriage while condemning the intermarriage itself. It is ironical indeed that the very programs so favored by the Jewish group to reduce prejudice and anti-Semitism also have the latent function of increasing the temptation of intermarriage. The same personal associations and social contacts that show both the Jew and the Gentile that the Jew is no different from other men tend to encourage the contacts that lead to intermarriage. Campaigns to abolish religious restrictions in fraternities and sororities; to abolish college quota systems

*It is interesting that almost half (45 per cent) of the students felt they were "non-participating Jews"; 28 per cent classed themselves as "Conservative Jews"; 19 per cent felt they were "Reform Jews"; and 8 per cent felt they were "Orthodox Jews."

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(instead of setting up Jewish colleges); pressures to eradicate gentlemen's agreements on real estate covenants, country club memberships, and resort restrictions; interfaith cultural and social activities—all have the beneficial result of helping the Jew and the Gentile understand each other, of enabling them to work together for common causes; but these same programs also result in smoothing the road that leads to intermarriage and the loss of the identity of the Jewish people by increasing the social and cultural contacts that lead to intermarriage.

I am not for a moment suggesting that these programs be discontinued or reversed. My purpose is only to show the other side of the coin, the problems that accompany present gains.

The full force of the problem of living in and associating with a Gentile world without being absorbed by it is faced by no group so directly as by unmarried Jewish young men and women. The psychological toll which this problem exacts from the minds and hearts of these young people should not be underestimated. For, on the one hand, they feel the compelling American urge to accept all people on the basis of individual worth, and on the other, they must face the possibility of carrying this doctrine to the extreme of intermarriage and thus face the accusing eye either of their own conscience or of the community and their parents.

It is only natural that the young Jewish man or woman growing up in a liberal American and Jewish environment learns well the lesson of cultural variability, a major theme of modern social science. And it is a short step from cultural variability to cultural relativity. "Does it really matter whether men worship in church or chapel, synagogue or mosque, in Hindu shrine or Buddhist temple? Does it really matter, so long as they believe in a divine purpose and in the brotherhood of man," declares James Warburg in a speech before an institute of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

On the abstract level there may be no contradiction between a belief in this liberal ideology and the belief in the necessity of Jewish endogamy, inmarriage. Cultural variation, we may say, doesn't mean that each culture doesn't have its own unique value and contribution to make. It doesn't mean that the individual is free to change his culture at will. Choosing our friends and associates on the basis of individual characteristics doesn't mean that cultural background has no influence on individual characteristics, nor does it mean that we should choose our husbands and wives with complete disregard of cultural and religious background.

But this is all on the abstract level.

Proceeding from the abstract to concrete situations, there is a certain amount of inevitable conflict solved with sometimes more, sometimes less, difficulty. It is the conflict that is rehearsed nightly at one Jewish dinner table or another, the problem of whether Dave may ask the girl next door, a Gentile girl, to the prom; the problem of whether Joan may accept a date from the captain of the football team, who is not Jewish; or the problem, as father says, "How long is this going to go on?"—meaning his son's or daughter's continued dating of a non-Jew; or the problem of whether to "run around" in an all-Jewish crowd or a mixed crowd; or the problem of whether to move into the largely Jewish dorm or the one where the Jews are fewer and living mostly with Christian roommates; or the problem of whether to date Sally again when you begin to become a little more than usually attracted to her. The individual situations are endless. In a very real sense this conflict strikes at the heart of the problem of Jewish life in America, the problem of being integrated without being absorbed.

It is a problem for which there are no blanket answers. Each individual case must find its own best solution. But the first step in the solution of any individual case must be an awareness by both the Jewish and Gentile communities of the problem's outline.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Israel and God

To the Editor of Commentary:

Is it not ironic that the people who belong among the elder statesmen of the old nations, who alone among the peoples have for centuries preached the doctrine of the unity of God and the brotherhood of man, should now be obsessed with an almost fetishistic concern with the State of Israel? The Canaanite cults described by Maurice Samuel (September) are horrifying illustrations of a morbid neo-tribalism. But perhaps just as pathological as Canaanization in Israel is the canonization of Israel implicit in the interchange of correspondence between Rabbi Dolgin and David Ben Gurion, published in your September issue under the revealing title "Can We Stay Jews Outside 'The Land'?"

The preservation of Judaism, like the preservation of all religion, is a matter of serious concern today. But Rabbi Dolgin takes an Irish bull by the horns when he suggests that the way to preserve it for the Jews of the world is by and through the State of Israel. Judaism can survive without Israel, it is Israel which cannot survive without Judaism—physically and politically as well as spiritually.

Although Ben Gurion is close to reason when he points out that the spiritual home of the Jews of the world lies in the Torah, his argument is specious when he declares that the Torah cannot suffice without a state—any sort of state—in Israel. The fact that an autonomous political entity exists upon the ground of our ancient Judaic kingdom does not mean that the Kingdom of God is here. By "Next year in Jerusalem" was not meant merely the erection of imposing government offices within the precincts of the city. The "prophetic goal" was not an empty return to the land, but a return to God. "Jerusalem," wrote Israel Zangwill, "like Heaven, is a state of mind." This state of mind may exist anywhere—or, as we see in the growing secularization of society, nowhere. Faith may move mountains, but mountains have no effect upon faith. Israeli Jews speak with contempt of the Diaspora Jews who cling to their exilic homes, tacitly accusing them of a crass adherence to the materialistic doctrine, *"Ubi bene, ibi patria"*; but they, too, despite the fact that their homes lie under the shadow of Mount Sinai, are still Jews of the Diaspora. . . .

A political state in Israel that does not embody the heritage and preserve the dignity and integrity of Judaism is a mockery. Ben Gurion speaks of its existence as a "dedicated" state, but its dedication emerges in the letters only as one to the "socialist philosophy as embodied in Mapai and the Histadrut"; at another time he expresses satisfaction just in its existence. Neither of these is sufficient. It is precisely because we see it as a state only like other states, with its petty factional bickerings, its lack of moral purpose, its shallow, materialistic political ideology which can even sanction an expedient flirtation with atheistic Communism, that the Jews of the world are repelled and shamed by it. In recent years, the neo-Protestant, Reinhold Niebuhr, and the neo-Catholic, T. S. Eliot, have adumbrated ideal states, the basis for which was religion (for one Protestantism, for the other Catholicism), but both have acknowledged that their states—like their religions—are more "other-worldly" than "this-worldly" and they remain amorphous cities in the sky. But Judaism is, and always has been, more practical. It is not a way of dying but a way of living. It is a system of government, a code of laws; a *Realpolitik*, a practical ethics; a course of conduct, not merely a ritual of set prayer.

Mazzini declared "Religion and politics are inseparable. Without religion, political science can only create despotism or anarchy. . . . Religion is the highest educational principle; politics are the application of that principle to the various manifestations of human existence." This has always been the primary concept of Judaism. There is no separation between the daily duties of our life and our religious obligations—we cannot render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's: a schism of that sort is unthinkable in and intolerable to Judaism. If Israel is dedicated, this is the principle to which it must be dedicated. In a Godless world, it must not be ashamed to speak for God—lest it be God-forsaken.

Wilhelmina Jacobs

East Orange, N. J.

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Who Is a Rightist?

To the Editor of Commentary:

I enjoy reading Commentary, and compliment you on your broad-mindedness in publishing the article "What Is the Right Up To?" (September) by M. J. Goldbloom. Printing that article next to Maurice Samuel's is like going from the sublime to the ridiculous. Mr. Goldbloom's article is full of nonsense and name-calling. Anybody who disagrees with these befuddled, so-called liberals is a rightist, a reactionary, a fascist, etc.

Our present Republican administration has inherited so many insoluble economic problems from Mr. Truman that it has not yet found a solution to the old question of how to "eat the cake and have it."

Raphael Yood

Plainfield, New Jersey

Gender

To the Editor of Commentary:

Your description of Dachine Rainer as a "poetess" (September) makes me suspect that one of your editors has not overly concerned himself with the work of female poets after the Age of Victoria. Unless your Sherry Abel is an editoress, Hannah Arendt an authoress, and Isa Kapp a revieweress, you had better put that noun "poetess" back among the cobwebs.

Sol Stein

New York City

[(The view of those who object to the feminine ending) "is that the female author is to raise herself to the level of the male author by asserting her right to his name; but if there is one profession in which more than in others the woman is the man's equal it is acting; and the actress is not known to resent the indication of her sex; the proof of real equality will be not the banishment of *authoress* as a degrading title, but its establishment on a level with *author*. Nor, after all, does an authoress, a doctoress, a lioness, a votaress, a prophetess, or a Jewess, cease to be an author, a doctor, a lion, a votary, a prophet, or a Jew, because she ends in *-ess*. . . ."

—H. W. Fowler, *Modern English Usage*]

Labor and Laski

To the Editor of Commentary:

May I comment briefly on George Lichtheim's statement in his review of Kingsley Martin's book on Harold Laski (July 1953): "Perhaps the fact that 'power' had irrevocably shifted to the other side of the Atlantic had something to do with the timidity [the British Labor Government] . . . displayed in office."

Approximately 20 per cent of industry was nationalized by this timid government, and planning for increased production and exports was successfully carried out. A tremendous scheme of national health insurance was inaugurated, and other vital social services were broadened and extended.

Ernest Bevin and Attlee were neither timid nor stupid about the menace of Russian imperialism; they saw its real nature before their American opposite numbers recognized it. India, Burma, and Ceylon were offered their freedom, and the Commonwealth of Nations really replaced the British Empire, with governments of people of color dominating the Commonwealth. Only in regard to Israel and the Arab nations, did the Labor Government show a lack of courage, insight, and imagination.

Mr. Lichtheim criticizes Harold J. Laski fairly and accurately. It is too bad he makes the kind of generalization in his book review that Laski was given to in his later years.

Walter R. Storey

Philadelphia, Pa.

Writing and Intermarriage

To the Editor of Commentary:

After reading my son's article "Growing Up Between Two Worlds" (July 1953)—and bearing in mind the writings of my other sons—I am tempted to add one thought to his conclusions on the problem of intermarriage (between Catholic and Jew): at least the union produces sons who can write for Commentary.

H. L. G.

Appeal

To the Editor of Commentary:

I am very interested in keeping abreast of current events in Jewish life in America and in Israel.

Before I was drafted, one of my main sources of information was Commentary, which gave me a complete account of Jewish affairs in an interesting and unbiased manner.

I am now stationed with the army in Iceland, and am completely detached from all happenings of current interest in Jewish affairs. There are also many other Jewish personnel here in Iceland who feel the same lack that I do.

We would therefore appreciate it no end if we could receive your magazine Commentary. Thank you.

(Pvt.) Murray Koppelman

Co M 278th Inf Rct

APO #81, New York, New York

[A few months ago we published a similar appeal, to which our readers generously responded with numerous gift subscriptions.—Ed.]

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Language of Life

THE ADVENTURES OF AUGIE MARCH. By SAUL BELLOW. Viking. 536 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by NORMAN PODHORETZ

AT FIRST sight, *The Adventures of Augie March* is very different from *Dangling Man* and *The Victim,* Saul's Bellow's first two novels. They were disciplined, abstract, subjective, and somber. But Mr. Bellow lets the reins go in this one. *Dangling Man* hardly ventured beyond the consciousness of its narrator; *Augie March* covers continents and the whole range of American society. *The Victim* restricted itself to the evocation of a nerve-pulling anxiety never adequately defined; *Augie March* is all variety, hopping from farce to melodrama, from abstract speculation to the most minute descriptions of faces, figures, and things. Its atmosphere, if not genial, is expansive, charged, effervescent. One senses the joy with which Mr. Bellow breathes the freer air; he writes like a man set loose from prison. Every page in his earlier books had a look of nervousness, as if expecting to be challenged to justify its presence in the total conception. In *Augie March,* every word exhales a devil-may-care, reckless confidence coming from the discovery of its right to exist solely for the sake of its own immediate impact. Mr. Bellow can't spurt out the images fast enough; the book is almost bursting at the seams in an effort to be exuberant:

"The rest of us had to go to the dispensary—which was like the dream of a multitude of dentists' chairs, hundreds of them in a space as enormous as an armory, and green bowls with designs of glass grapes, drills lifted zigzag as insects' legs, and gas flames on the porcelain swivel trays—a thundery gloom in Harrison Street of limestone county buildings and cumbersome red streetcars with metal grillwork on their windows and monarchical iron whiskers of cowcatchers front and rear. They lumbered and clanged, and their brake tanks panted in the slushy brown of a winter afternoon or the bare stone brown of a summer's, salted with ash, smoke, and prairie dust, with long stops at the clinics to let off clumpers, cripples, hunchbacks, brace-legs, crutch-wielders, tooth and eye sufferers, and all the rest."

Thomas Urquart (17th-century translator of Rabelais) and Smollett and Dickens are behind the raciness, pace, and thickness of that prose, not Flaubert or James or Forster—and that in itself indicates pretty well what Mr. Bellow is up to. He is trying to put blood into contemporary fiction and break through the hidebound conventions of the well-made novel. This is a herculean job that will have to be done if we are to have a living literature at all. But our sympathy with Mr. Bellow's ambition and our admiration for his pioneering spirit should not lead us to confuse the high intention with the realization.

THE strain is apparent not only in many lapses, where Mr. Bellow tugs at syntax frantically, as if squeezing and twisting the language were enough to get all the juices out of it, but even in a passage as good as the one quoted. In a comparable paragraph of Urquart or Smollett, we get the sense of an endlessly flowing fountain; the stuff comes quickly and easily, with an effect rather like a Brueghel painting. But the feeling conveyed by Mr. Bellow's exuberance is an overwhelming impulse to get in as many adjectives and details as possible, regardless of considerations of rhythm, modulation, or, for that matter, meaning. Like Milton in *Paradise Lost,* who was trying to do the near impossible too, Mr. Bellow seems frightened of letting up; a moment's relaxation might give the game away. The result is that we are far more aware of the words than the objects, of Mr. Bellow than of the world—which is the reverse of how he would like us to respond. His language lacks the suction to draw us into its stream.

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Exuberance isn't the only quality he strains for; he wants detachment and impersonality too. Mr. Bellow apparently knows that *Dangling Man* was ruined by its non-dramatic subjectivity, and *The Victim* marred by its failure to relate Levinthal's anxiety to the world outside. This time every precaution, we feel, has been taken to insure that *Augie March* shall be rich with life and mature in viewpoint. It proliferates in people, and Mr. Bellow also uses a narrator quite unlike himself in order to increase the distance between him and his material. I find it extremely difficult, however, to determine how often and how much he takes Augie at face value, and I think Mr. Bellow himself would be hard pressed to answer the question. It isn't that Augie lacks a personality of his own. Actually, considering how inherently incredible a character he is—tough as nails and sensitive as a poet, a handsome sex-hero and a profound moralist, a bum and a sophisticated man-about-town—he comes off very well on the realistic level. But he doesn't represent a point of view independent of Mr. Bellow's.

THE jargon Augie speaks—it's the language of the autodidact—is a device that permits Mr. Bellow to get away with his uncertainty: "I am an American, Chicago born—Chicago, that somber city—and go at things as I have taught myself, free-style, and will make the record in my own way: first to knock, first admitted; sometimes an innocent knock, sometimes a not so innocent. But a man's character is his fate, says Heraclitus, and in the end there isn't any way to disguise the nature of the knocks by acoustical work on the door or gloving the knuckles."

Mr. Bellow is no doubt poking fun at his narrator here through mimicry, but we are supposed to be taking what Augie says very seriously: it's the theme of the novel, after all. The main effect of the mimicry is to give Mr. Bellow an out (he *knows* what sort of character his narrator is), not to qualify our response to Augie in any significant way. This kind of trick we are familiar with from Auden's early poetry, in which self-mockery becomes an excuse for the self-indulgent refusal to make up his mind.

Consequently, two things are always going on in *Augie March*. We are actually permitted to see the world only from Augie's perspective —and it is a very limited one—while being aware that Mr. Bellow shifts constantly in his attitude toward Augie, sometimes identifying with him completely, sometimes standing off with an equivocal neutrality very far from the detachment he's after.

Consider, for example, the love affairs in the book. They are obviously drawn not from life but from day-dream. It's impossible to believe that Mr. Bellow is unaware of this: from internal evidence we know that he is a first-hand authority on street-corner legend and pool-room mythology. But he gives us in Lucy Magnus the tired old image of the calculating, frigid rich girl who has always served as the scapegoat for her class in the bull sessions of the pool-room. And there is Mimi, the waitress who can be "one of the boys" (Augie of course doesn't sleep with her—another proof that Mr. Bellow knows the conventions of the pool-room). Thea is the most blatant example. Unbelievably beautiful, she runs after Augie (even coming to his room while he's in bed with a working girl), loves him madly, supports him in wealth and style in exotic Mexico, gives him a chance to show his stuff as a he-man trainer of eagles, and then clears out leaving him with the luxury of a broken heart and a gorgeous movie star to sleep with.

Is Mr. Bellow offering us some sort of comment on the fantasies of Americans? If so, what is it? Is Augie's jargon intended as the barometer to register the author's changes in attitude? If so, there must be more than mere mimicry in the standoffish passages to overpower or at least balance the pull of the action. The suspicion forces itself upon one that Mr. Bellow is resorting to a convenient trick only to sneak in a titillating appeal to our self-dramatizing day-dreams and his own.

THE detachment Mr. Bellow is most often capable of is that of the caricaturist: "As she had great size and terrific energy of constitution she produced all kinds of excesses. Even physical ones: moles, blebs, hairs, bumps in her forehead, huge concentration in her neck; she had spiraling reddish hair springing with no negligible beauty and definiteness from her scalp, tangling as it widened up and out, cut duck-tail fashion in the back and scrawled out high above her ears."

Obviously, there is a great sensitivity here to the way things look and feel. The same energetic eye is very good at capturing mannerisms and tricks of speech too. But Mr. Bellow's

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relish in his own performance and his fascination with externals combine somehow to prevent reverberations below the surface from forcing their way through—as they do force their way through in Dickens' Mr. Podsnap, for instance, or George Eliot's Mrs. Glegg. As a result, most of Mr. Bellow's characters are one-dimensional: they exhibit not individuality but peculiarity. This simplicity of characterization is of course reinforced by the fact that Augie's point of view is not used to brighten the light thrown on the characters but to dim it to a flicker.

THE portrayal of the cynical old Russian Jewish matriarch who raises Augie and tries to teach him how to become a gentleman is a case in point. We know in great detail what she looks like, how she speaks, what her notions about life are. But we get no sense of her as a complex, contradictory, rounded human being. Mr. Bellow never asks himself the question: What would it be like to be Grandma Lausch? He doesn't care, contenting himself merely with a vivid sketch of an eccentric old woman, to whom he asks us to respond not as we might to a real Grandma Lausch, but only to one figure who exists in the imagination of Augie March. And Augie, of course, is taken in by her. The awe of the child clings to his descriptions of her, and its impact is far more powerful than his assurances that he really understands her now.

The point to be drawn from all this is that Mr. Bellow hasn't yet worked his way out of the non-dramatic solipsism of his earlier books: the most successfully drawn character in *Augie March* is not a human being but an ego. Yet Mr. Bellow has made some real strides forward. I know of no modern novel which speaks up more wonderfully for the necessity of love and charity than *Augie March*. The way that compassion wins out over envy in the portrayal of Augie's brother Simon is a triumph of the moral will: "He was ashamed, stony with shame. His secrets were being told. His secrets! What did they amount to? You'd think they were as towering as the Himalayas. But all they were about was his mismanaged effort to live. To live and not die. And this was what he had to be ashamed of." There is hope that this note will grow into the kind of compassion that makes a great novelist. The novelist begins with pity—in which his own emotions are more important than the object which has called them forth—but he moves on to sympathy, in which detachment has been achieved without a diminution of feeling. It is the most difficult of all attitudes to reach; that is why we have so few genuine novelists. So far Mr. Bellow is closer to pity than to sympathy.

IT WOULD be misleading to suggest that Mr. Bellow is another Smollett. *Augie March* makes a bid for a greater style of picaresque than Smollett's, for it is also a novel of ideas. The book is about America, or, more specifically, the problem of the individual in a conformist society.

Augie March stands for the American dream of the inviolable individual who has the courage to resist his culture—that figure whom Tocqueville doubted could survive the realities of American life and whom David Riesman has lately tried to reinstate as an ideal. His quest is for happiness through self-realization. The power to find oneself and then to submit to what one *is*—that is the superior fate Augie believes he can achieve. He rejects an enormous range of flattering temptations—power, wealth, devotion to cause—because his will to oppose is stronger than his will to be a recruit and conform.

But Augie is a representative American in other ways too, the image of modern man living in a hopelessly fluid society, forced to choose an identity because he has inherited none. Augie is fatherless, Jewish, and penniless. He starts with nothing and is eventually propelled into everything, but he won't stay put and he won't admit defeat: "I may well be a flop at this line of endeavor. Columbus too thought he was a flop, probably, when they sent him back in chains, which didn't prove there was no America."

Mr. Bellow probably intended this book as a parable of American optimism. He is saying, and rightly, that the American dream is a faith which, like any other, can only be maintained stubbornly in spite of the evidence. Augie's optimism is not blind. You cannot argue with his belief in the American abstractions by telling him how completely at odds they are with nature, human, social, and physical. He knows all your arguments and uses them against himself. What's more, he has been through hell and back, he has touched bottom, he has seen cruelty and rottenness and degradation. He is a first-hand authority on evil. Or would be, if he were human. But he

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remains a mere device, not a test case at all. Augie reminds us of those animals in the cartoons who get burned to cinders, flattened out like pancakes, exploded, and generally made a mess of, yet who turn up intact after every catastrophe, as if nothing had happened. Though he goes through everything, he undergoes nothing. He doesn't change in the course of the novel; he doesn't even learn, for all his great show of having learned. He merely resists the apparent lessons of his experience. So that Mr. Bellow's failure to explore concretely the impact of experience on faith makes that faith—with which, incidentally, I am very much in sympathy—seem merely willful. He has written a deeper parable than he may have intended, and Tocqueville, alas, still hasn't been proved wrong.

Augie March is an impressive *tour de force,* impressive enough to earn the right to be criticized as a criticism of life. Mr. Bellow deserves our admiration and gratitude for showing us the direction serious fiction must take if it is to come alive: it will have to get in touch with day-to-day concerns, it will have to set itself rigorous standards of detachment and complexity that do not result in a shrivelled and straitjacketed transcription of petty worries, and it will have to open up the sources of vitality in American life.

Mr. Bellow has the very genuine distinction of giving us a sense of what a real American idiom might look like. It is no disgrace to have failed in a pioneer attempt.

Religion in the Colleges

CAMPUS GODS ON TRIAL. By CHAD WALSH. Macmillan. 138 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILL HERBERG

CHAD WALSH is poet in residence and professor of English at Beloit College; he is also a minister in the Episcopal Church. Naturally, then, he is concerned with the religious situation on the American campus. In *Campus Gods on Trial,* Mr. Walsh seeks to expose the falsity of the many substitute faiths that flourish in the academic community and to vindicate classical Christianity as a total philosophy of life. The book is essentially a work of apologetics in the better sense of the term.

Mr. Walsh begins with describing the "average Christian" student's religious background:

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the home dominated by fundamentalistic Biblicism ("the fiery furnace"); the "liberal" home in which Christianity is "indistinguishable from a vague humanitarianism and the duties of citizenship" ("the lukewarm bath"); the atheistic home; and in a few cases the home in which religion is a "warm fire." He follows this up with a brief discussion of what the student finds when he gets to college and his confused response to the diverse influences impinging upon him.

Only with the third chapter, entitled "Mostly Isms," does the real purpose of the book begin to emerge. In it Mr. Walsh gives the more obvious "campus gods"—Progress, Despair, Humanitarianism, Americanism, Capitalism, Communism (which he improperly identifies with Marxism)—a quick going over. He finds something true in most of these faiths; the trouble begins when they try to exalt themselves into total philosophies of life demanding total allegiance. They then become idolatrous and destructive.

This theme is continued in a discussion of cultural relativism and "natural law" in which Mr. Walsh tries to maintain a position that embraces both as "parts of a larger and complex reality." The pictorial device he uses to illustrate his position is the rather familiar one of a divine broadcasting station constantly sending out "messages of advice and guidance over the air waves" for reception by men; "but some radio sets are better than others, and some people listen more attentively and catch more quickly what comes from the loud-speaker." Hence both the unity and the diversity that we find among men in their moral ideas and standards.

The "psychoanalytic" argument that religion is mere wish-fulfillment is dealt with in the fifth chapter, while the next two are devoted to the much more critical problem of science and scientism. "Science," Mr. Walsh says quite truly, "is a useful servant. Scientism is a deity. The real scientists rarely practice the cult of Scientism (faith in science as a complete way of life). The faithful worshipers are the bystanders and hangers on of science: people who know just enough about what science can do to be sure that it can do everything." He indicates the possibilities and limitations of science, and warns against the confusion of science properly so called with Naturalism and Positivism, two more of the "campus gods." He also shows how it is possible to find an entirely

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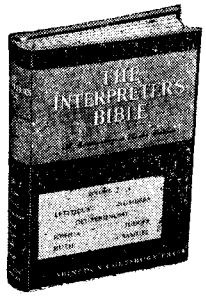

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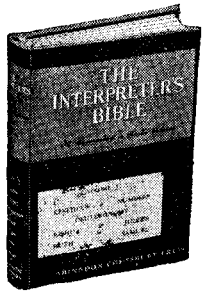

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adequate place for science in a religiously grounded multi-dimensional picture of reality that does justice to all human concerns and interests.

In the next section of the book, taken up with the "atmospheric," "psychological," and "heartfelt" objections to religion—it's "old stuff"; it's a "failure"; it's not "objective"; it's an "infringement on freedom"; it's "too spiritual and otherworldly"; it's "too exclusive," "too individualistic," etc., etc.—I think Mr. Walsh is at his best and most convincing. The shortcomings and corruptions of present-day Christianity are dealt with in a candid spirit. He makes it perfectly clear that the living faith he speaks of is not a comfortable creed for the self-righteous. It is "medicine, and the church is a hospital. Both are for hypocrites, double-talkers, and phonies like you and me. . . . The course of treatment is lifelong. But there are two things we can be sure of: We shall have plenty of companionship with our fellow-patients all along the way. And the physician is absolutely reliable."

In the last three chapters, striking a more direct and positive note, Mr. Walsh discusses the "credentials of Christianity," and in the course of this he permits himself some rather dubious arguments. He outlines a six months' "experiment" in daily prayer, Bible reading, churchgoing, and Christian living. He concludes with an exposition of the "three words of Christianity": man, God, and love.

It is impossible to read this work without being impressed with its clarity and competence. Mr. Walsh's admirers are not altogether wrong in hailing him as the "American C. S. Lewis." Yet I cannot escape the feeling that the book misses fire—perhaps just because of its confident pigeon-holing, its pat dealing with something so complex and individual as the religious concern of human personalities—and that it does not really deal with the religious situation on the American campus as I have come to know it in the course of the past few years.

Perhaps I can best indicate what I mean by noting that Mr. Walsh's picture of the student mind on religion is one of almost unrelieved obduracy and indifference. No one reading the volume will find in it so much as an inkling of the fact that on the American campus there is, to quote Dean Pike's recent review of this very book, "a new openness to the Judeo-Christian tradition, a deeper questioning of the

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dogmas of secularism." The tide, it seems, is definitely turning. Commenting on John Hallowell's *Main Currents of Modern Political Thought* in the *Saturday Review* for March 3, 1951, Professor H. Stuart Hughes noted somewhat wryly: "Ten or fifteen years ago, no self-respecting 'enlightened' intellectual would have been caught dead with a religious interpretation of anything. . . . Now Mr. Hallowell confirms the suspicions that have gradually been drifting up to us from the students we confront. The avant-garde is becoming 'old-fashioned'; religion is now the latest thing."

Mr. Walsh is apparently still writing about the student mind of a decade or two ago. Of course, the mass of students, like the mass of Americans, are still religiously illiterate and secular-minded. But the intellectual tone has begun to change. Even the obduracy and indifference are of a different order: the indifference is less assured, the obduracy is more serious and sophisticated. Increasing numbers of students are aware of a deepening religious concern. And the intellectual vanguard on the campus is definitely thinking along new lines, lines that make Kierkegaard, Niebuhr, and Tillich, Maritain and de Lubac, Buber, Rosenzweig, and Heschel, the "idea-men" of the time.

Because Mr. Walsh seems unaware of all this, or at least gives it no recognition in his book, his whole approach suffers from a certain flatness and conventionality. His theology appears, with some minor qualifications, to be quite sound as an interpretation of Christian faith in the Anglican tradition. But that is just the trouble, it is merely "sound"; there is no tension, no dynamic, no passion in it. There is very little to stir the imagination to intellectual excitement and commitment. Mr. Walsh's well-bred, rather "tweedy" style well suits the relaxed temper of his book.

What I am saying really amounts to this: Mr. Walsh's book is not in the line of religious thinking of this time of crisis, and it is "crisis" theology, if anything, that appeals to the new student mind. Mr. Walsh, in short, does not seem to me to speak to the condition of the student of our time.

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Two of the Moderns

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Reviewed by CLEMENT GREENBERG

THE reputations of Matisse, Picasso, and the other contemporary masters rest ultimately on a comparatively small number of masterpieces sorted out from a much greater number of unsuccessful or trivial works. Titian, Velasquez, and Rubens, too, produced many unsuccessful pictures, but these ordinarily led *toward* their successful ones; the curious, the problematical thing about the great moderns is that their bad pictures, once the artist has reached maturity, usually lead *away* from their good pictures. Why this should be so, I do not know, but it contributes to the impression of an anarchy of tendencies and directions made by modern art as a whole—an impression that is fundamentally false because in its best products modern art does go pretty much in the same direction.

The late Chaim Soutine offers an exception and a paradox in that his good and bad pictures lead towards each other and require each other without this making his work any the less problematical. A further paradox is offered in that the capacity of Soutine's painting to involve, intrigue, and affect other artists is out of all proportion to its degree of realization. His ratio of hits to misses is low, and even when he did hit a picture off, more often than not it teeters on the edge of a miss. It is this very teetering, however, that makes Soutine's painting so interesting to fellow artists—because it tells so vividly of the self-torture of modern painting, its inherent difficulties and frustrations, but also of the possibilities of triumph just within its reach.

CHAGALL got what he wanted in painting far more often than Soutine did. If the latter is the type of the tormented, dissatisfied artist, Chagall seems by contrast the type of the serene one. But this serenity is still more apparent than real,

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for Chagall has his doubts in plenty, only does not work them out so conspicuously in his art. He did his best oils between 1910 and 1920, and these are enough to install him in the history of art as a painter of at least the second rank. Since then his work has been softened and sweetened by the practice of that cuisine of viscous oil which seems to incorporate for him the essence of French tradition—a tradition he adores as only one originally an outsider could. However, in a few recent "pictures" (shown in New York this past winter) that were done on flat square tiles mortared together to form a support like a canvas, with the pigment fired in and the surface either glazed or unglazed, his color has recovered some of the raw immediacy that was one of the notable strengths of his early work. If his tile paintings continue to maintain this level, we shall have to assign him a larger place in the pantheon of modern art.

In any case, as an etcher and lithographer, as distinct from painter, Chagall belongs altogether in the first rank, unrivaled except by Picasso in this century; and his book illustrations, together with that master's, make a last glorious burst in what seems to be an expiring art. His blacks, whites, and grays are here the subtler and profounder expression of a gift for color that too often contents itself in oil with tried and true effects obtained from standard recipes.

But I find Soutine not only more interesting than Chagall, for all his deficiency in achievement, but more sympathetic. Far away from him is that cloying, folkish cuteness which the latter cultivates in his role of lovable, fantastical Jewish genius from Vitebsk. Soutine had no truck with such self-indulgent exhibitionism. He was, if I may put it that way, too Jewish—or at least too much a Litvak—to put his East European Jewishness on show as something exotic and picturesque. Yet, if such a thing as Jewishness can be made palpable in art, I find more of it in Soutine's than in Chagall's. Soutine is more naive and direct and absorbed, less self-conscious and more involved with his feelings than with the effect in view. He looked away from himself, and the trees, fields, flowers, animals, houses, and people he painted from are not a set of iconographic themes on which to ring variations, as his subjects are for Chagall, but so much existence to be grasped through paint.

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Coming to Paris from a *shtetl* in that same Lithuanian White Russia which Chagall came from, Soutine got his first good look at the museum art of the West in the Louvre when he was already past adolescence. He never got over it. Chagall was affected in the same way by the Louvre, but he remained less hypnotized; he deliberately went to school with Cubism and Matisse, whereas Soutine, for all he absorbed from modernism, never really gave it his assent. Aspiring above all to the depth, volume, and illustrative power that Rembrandt and Courbet got by shading, he was yet unwilling to sacrifice the expressive force of pure color as he had seen it in Van Gogh; nor could he put out of his mind the way Cézanne built a picture by massing planes of prismatic tone. But these divergent methods and aims could be reconciled only if one or the other of them were drastically subordinated. Soutine's stubborn, arrogant refusal to cede an inch anywhere is as much responsible for the frenzied, turbulent look of his pictures as the high pitch of feeling at which they were painted.

This effort to do the impossible, the absoluteness of it, and the terms of it, are what fascinate so many painters today. This, aside from his extraordinary capacity for color, pure and impure. And at the moment regard for his painting grows among non-painters too. But it should be mentioned that a lot of collectors buy him, and have bought him, mainly because he was a Jew and they themselves are Jewish (the nationalism that many Jews express in collecting art, all the more ardent for being unconscious—most of them would shrink from anything positive in the way of *that* kind of nationalism—is a curious feature of the modern art scene). This does not, however, take anything away from Soutine; he will remain, I believe, one of the very most important of the artists of our century, however incomplete.

THE Soutine portfolio at hand, with an introduction and very brief notes on the individual pictures—both full of turgid commonplaces—contains ten color plates of good quality made from fairly representative originals. The only fault I have to find with their choice is that nothing is included from the last years of the artist's life, when he won through to a kind of calm that made possible a firmer control and unity of means, the result of which was some *complete* masterpieces. Also, some of the plates

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seem to have been trimmed a little, to judge from the way the end of Soutine's signature is cut off—but then that may have been his own doing. (Incidentally, for the facts about Soutine's life and death the reader should consult Alfred Werner's article in COMMENTARY for May 1948.)

The selection of the pictures reproduced in the Chagall portfolio makes more or less the same assessment of his career as I do (which is pretty standard): seven date from between 1910 and 1913. The three others, from the 1940's, are particularly well chosen, being among the few superior works Chagall turned out in that decade. And the introduction offers at least some facts about his life, while the notes on the pictures are more honest and perceptive than those in the Soutine portfolio—which may not be saying much.

New England and Hollywood

THE ENORMOUS RADIO AND OTHER STORIES. By JOHN CHEEVER. Funk and Wagnalls. 237 pp. $3.50.

SOME FACES IN THE CROWD. By BUDD SCHULBERG. Random House. 308 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by MORRIS FREEDMAN

THE modern short story ranges from the overinflated bromide, the kind of thing the slicks and certain of the ladies' magazines do so neatly, to the highly concentrated, short novel, complex and ambigious, which we find sometimes in the little magazines and in *The New Yorker*. The extremes of this gamut may be seen in the collections of Budd Schulberg and John Cheever. Where Schulberg elaborates into a full story the commonplace of a child's discovery of the world's untrustworthiness (which never, in any case, occurs in a moment, as Schulberg with a Hollywood sense of economy would have us believe), Cheever tosses off, in part of a sentence, a far more perceptive comment about a neglected child's premature instinct of self-protection: "[The child and the nurse] quarreled a good deal when they were alone, and they quarreled like adults, with a cunning knowledge of each other's frailties."

Schulberg, the son of a Hollywood producer and born and raised there, seems congenitally unable to see the world except through the

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special lenses developed by Hemingway (the sentimentalized prize fight and the brutalized deep-sea fishing stories) or Fitzgerald (the beautiful rich girl with a suicidal drive); when he writes of Hollywood it is with the glib cynicism the movies have perfected for self-portraits. His capacity for originality in observation or tone is so meager, so constricted or so undeveloped, that minor perceptions emerge as momentous revelations and obvious flourishes of style betray an excessive labor. Cheever, a product of the Hebraic New England conscience, implacable as a Kafkaesque judge, cuts through the layers of tawdry pretense and elaborate alibi while arraigning his defendants—all of them guilty, often as vaguely and as profoundly as Kafka's people—of some breach against the mysterious deity of honest grace and lightness and self-understanding. Cheever's intelligence is startling and disturbing in its cold superiority as he bares a human problem to the bone, but his fine and controlled compassion is deep and thoughtful and genuine. Schulberg can only give us in the end pale reproductions of the usual contempt for the bully, the anti-Negro sadist, the cheap entertainment celebrity; the stimulus is only of a memory of a distant response, long ago buried in the store of attitudes we take for granted.

Schulberg dislikes Hollywood, from which he is a loudly proclaimed expatriate. But his antipathy is marked by an adolescent malice, an adolescent narrowness of concentration, an adolescent's assumption of a pose he knows will get admiration: the big-shot producer about to be fired, being polished by a collection of unpleasant creatures in a night club who want him to get them into the movies; the simple-minded braggart with the delusion of the grandness of Hollywood who talks himself into a studio job and then out again, and ends up as a barker on a sightseeing tour; the fired studio producer who goes out to buy his children presents one Christmas in order to keep alive the fantasy of a bountiful Santa Claus when his former stars and directors fail to show up.

The most ambitious story, a long account of a know-nothing entertainer who gains a dangerously large following, is nowhere as successful as *What Makes Sammy Run?* Schulberg wrote about Sammy with the fierce and pitiless understanding of involvement and of a certain self-identification; there was no condescension. His portrait of Lonesome Rhodes, "Your Arkansas Traveller," is fashionably supercilious and distant; his shifting of responsibility for the hackneyed attitudes onto the smart-alecky girl who tells the story, a transparent device, betrays the limit, not to say the shabbiness, even of the aim: "blame her for the shallowness, not me"—but who cares about *her* self-conscious, superficial handling of the material?

CHEEVER'S *bête noir* is New York City. It is a place that has the quality of hell, almost literally at some moments: "They sat together with their children through the sooty twilights, when the city to the south burns like a Bessemer furnace, and the air smells of coal, and the wet boulders shine like slag, and the Park itself seems like a strip of woods on the edge of a coal town." The havoc the city works on genuine human beings is Cheever's theme. The insanities connected with city life are simultaneously harrowing and hilarious. Perhaps the most moving story in the book, "O City of Broken Dreams," is also the funniest. A small-town bus driver and his family are lured to the big city by an irresponsible, fancy-talking Broadway producer who has read two acts of a play the driver has written. While the driver is waiting for an executive in a Radio City office, the secretary offers to sell him fresh farm eggs or costume jewelry wholesale; the unpaid butler of a Park Avenue establishment trails a bloody bandage from his finger over the carpets as he berates his employer who, at the moment, is occupied in a floating crap game in Harlem.

At first reading, one comes away with a sense that Cheever's characters are sunk in a mire of unrelieved hopelessness. A New England farmer and daughter are permanently and callously corrupted into hard-bitten eccentricity by a New York Communist couple who come to the area one year to help lead a strike. The wife of a placid marriage one day finds her radio tuning in the other apartments in her building; the dirty private activity of her neighbors overpowers her and detonates the buried bomb of secrets in her own life. An unhappy couple obsessively retrace the early events of their marriage in a forlorn attempt to recapture the feelings that originally motivated them.

But the volume as a whole yields the secret of coping with the eternal imminence of disaster which is living. In three stories Cheever trans-

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This *I Believe*

by Elmer Davis*

. . . "WHY should we be saved? What have we got that our adversaries have not that makes us worth saving? Our faults, God knows, are numerous and glaring enough; recognition of those faults is the chief cause of the loss of confidence that has afflicted so many people of the Western world. But we do recognize them; we do not pretend that our failures were decreed by ineluctable historical necessity; nor do we rewrite history according to the precepts of Double-think, to prove that they never happened at all.

"What we have to offer, to the contemporary world and to the future, is a method; and the freedom of the mind that makes that method possible. Not an infallible method, but the best yet discovered for reaching increasingly closer approximations to the truth. It will never offer its conclusions with such assurance as does dialectical materialism—which, by a singular coincidence, always seems to produce the conclusions that are convenient for the men in power. It can only say, We have kept the door open for exploration of all possibilities, consideration of all objections, application of all possible tests; and this is what seems to be true. Maybe something else will seem more probable later on, but this is the best we can do now. Or, as the method was summarized long ago—Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

"This method has been responsible for almost all human progress. Outside the Western world it does not exist, except in those parts of the East which have been influenced by Western thought; if it died here, it would die there, too. President Conant has remarked that the right to think and question and investigate is the basic difference between the free world and the world of totalitarianism. It might well be the basic difference that would save us, if it came to a shooting war; and whether it does that or not, this one thing—the scientific method, and above all the freedom of the mind that makes it possible—is what makes us worth saving."

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cends the bleakness of Kafka; the other stories, then, must be read as demonstrations not of what Cheever believes life must inevitably be, but of what it should not be, of what we should fight against it becoming. "The Pot of Gold" concludes with the husband turning to his family for richness and away from the mad schemes for success which have driven him for so long. In "The Cure," a husband separated from his wife is slowly disintegrating in his loneliness, succumbing to a series of personal horrors in the improbable and therefore all the more macabre settings of Madison Avenue and suburbia, until he goes back to her and his children to save himself. In "Goodbye, My Brother," the first story, Cheever movingly attacks the narrow-minded enemies of instinct and self-fulfillment. Salvation lies in meeting the unavoidable horror head on, and engaging it with one's best talents, not obscuring it or fleeing from it.

It is no accident, of course, that Cheever should be so much more Hebraically serious, both in his observation and in his prophecy, than Schulberg. Cheever, by reason of his New England background, has breathed into his system that Biblical concentration on the moral nature of reality, on the inescapable essence of a word or an act, which we find in Hawthorne, Melville, and James; and his good sense has kept him from beclouding his vision with what Steven Marcus criticized in his recent survey of the contemporary American short story, the distorted Puritan search for the overall structural connections in events. Cheever's great advantage over Schulberg is that he has not had to overcome the effect of a wrenching discontinuity with the past.

It is painful to contrast Schulberg with Cheever, for his intentions are so clearly to achieve the urbane subtlety, the sense of self-identity, the intelligent and easy maturity, which are Cheever's—simply by inheritance, as it were. Schulberg's solemnity in every story, which equalizes the trivial and the portentous; the impatient variety of content; the attempts to avert the obvious by meaningless twists and confusions of plot ("The One He Called Winnie," about a beautiful Negro child's nurse who doesn't marry a white man either because she is passionately warned by her father not to, or because the little white boy she is in charge of needs her, is especially exasperating), are signs of a real but halting and bewildered seriousness. His instinctive smartness and earnest ambition show through even the most trivial of the stories. You can feel him groping all the time: for the subject which will illuminate some hidden and essential truth like a burst of fireworks, for the manner which will proudly demonstrate his confident wisdom and control. But his best story, about the conflict in an Irish family between the values of education and the glittering fame of the boxing world, is merely superbly competent slick-magazine stuff; one or two pieces, flat conversations of the kind usually but inexactly described as *New Yorker*-ish, are curiously simple-minded and just underwritten where they try to be ambiguous.

Schulberg is another of the Jewish writers like Weidman and Shaw whose work has skimmed close to the solid shores of genuine American literary achievement. These writers, in a sense which can serve only as an initial, temporary excuse, have been incapacitated from realizing their promise by the lack of a serious and active artistic tradition, something they give hints of recognizing; but instead of seeking one, as, say, Lionel Trilling has done, in the depths of history and in the classical values, instead of dealing with the lack as part of the process of developing an authentic idiom, they have casually gone for their guidance to the immediately popular culture heroes. Schulberg is stricken with a special disability. The Jews who journeyed West to make movies might better have remained in New York to make dresses: the ancient Jewish (and broadly European) notion of the glory of the senses and of the intellect had been lost to them, and, of course, could not be used or passed on. Schulberg, we guess from the vague bravado of his self-exile from Hollywood, came East because of a nagging sense of the inadequacy of the movie center's ideal. But he has substituted one hollow idol for another, Hollywood rebellion for "Hollywood," both cut out of the same pattern; he has been conditioned by the very air he has swallowed to respond in tediously familiar, mechanically limited reflexes, no matter how hard he tries to make them appear different. There is a somber quality about the book, for it reveals that, however disquieting and respectable the prompting of Mr. Schulberg's urge to escape may be, he doesn't know where to go—except to more of the same.

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Europe's Loss, Our Gain

THE REFUGEE INTELLECTUAL. By DONALD PETERSON KENT. Columbia University Press. 317 pp. $5.00.

THE CULTURAL MIGRATION. Edited by W. REX CRAWFORD. University of Pennsylvania Press. 156 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by HERBERT J. GANS

BETWEEN 1933 and 1941 approximately 7,600 refugee professionals—scholars, artists, lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc.—came to the United States from Germany, Austria, and other parts of Hitler's Europe. Their experiences in and reactions to America are discussed in these two volumes.

The Refugee Intellectual is a sociological study of the extent to which these professionals have adjusted to American life—occupationally, economically, socially, and psychologically. From responses to a mail questionnaire and personal interviews, the author presents a competent quantitative and qualitative picture of the refugees' struggles and successes in overcoming various obstacles, from finding jobs and making friends to learning how to live with the American's chronic inability to say no when he means no.

The book, however, is disappointing, and the title misleading, because the study does not concern itself with the adjustment of the refugees *as* intellectuals, and the effects of their migration and new cultural environment on their intellectual products. The experiences refugee professionals encountered in getting settled physically and occupationally were not significantly different from those of their non-professional compatriots, and consequently the book often comes up with the same conclusions reached by Maurice R. Davie's 1947 study, *Refugees in America.*

The Cultural Migration is the printed version of the Benjamin Franklin lectures given by five noted ex-European intellectuals from diverse fields of knowledge (all but one of them refugees). Franz L. Neumann relates this cultural migration to previous ones; Henri Peyre, in what is the best essay in the book, compares European and American intellectual life; Erwin Panofsky describes the Europeans' role in encouraging the study of art history in America; Wolfgang Köhler contributes a history of European and American psychology; and Paul Tillich analyzes the pragmatic approach to theology he found in the United States. The lectures are rambling and unconnected; they are good when they offer personal experiences and evaluations, poor when the authors simply rehash their own intellectual specialties.

Both books are at their best when the European scholars describe how they view American life. Thereby they contribute not only to an ever developing comparative study of American and European culture and social structure, but also to the strengthening of the realization that with all its faults, American society permits the intellectual more emotional, social, and intellectual freedom than European society. The authors of *The Cultural Migration* do not hesitate, however, to express their fear that this freedom is now being threatened by internal forces.

The five lecturers agree that the refugee scholar's major contribution to American intellectual life has been his essentially theoretical and system-building approach, which has helped to temper and broaden the more strictly empirical, often a-historical, and narrowly problem-solving approach of many American researchers and scholars.

But it seems to me that the refugees have done much more for our intellectual life than to introduce "European" methodology and enrich college curricula and journals with their knowledge of European culture. It is true that the refugees have not made sensational contributions or blazed new trails. But how could they? Kent's study shows clearly that, except for the few hundred intellectuals who had "names," most of the refugee scholars had to worry about getting jobs and providing for families rather than about competing with Americans for intellectual headlines.

At the same time, the refugees have made an important contribution, in a quiet and unobtrusive way, by continuing to "be themselves" while becoming integrated into our intellectual life. The European intellectual's training and knowledge cuts across the sciences and the humanities; it is much broader than that of his American colleague. Furthermore, he has an attitude towards his status as an intellectual which reflects his membership in a society in which the intellectual was highly respected and lived a leisurely and relatively independent life. Once established in a European university, the

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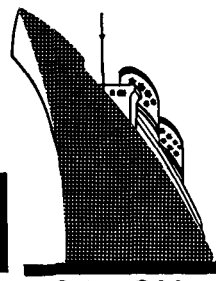

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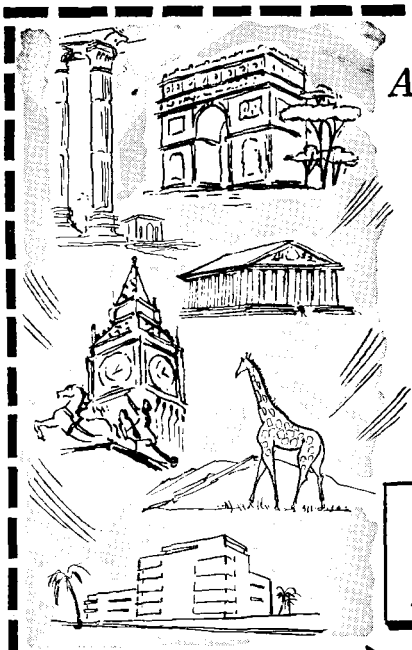

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scholar was allowed complete freedom in choosing the subjects he would study and teach, and was less dependent on research grants, course assignments, and the opinions of colleagues than his American counterpart.

THE refugee scholars could not fail to impress American students and colleagues alike with the broadness of their knowledge, and thus lent strength to those who fought for broader liberal arts programs in higher education. With their lack of doubt about being "intellectuals," they showed American scholars how to achieve self-confidence and greater security in the right to be intellectual, to pursue basic research and esoteric "impractical" studies. It may have been pure coincidence, but the refugees came in time to give American intellectuals of the post-World War I era the final psychological boost up into their place in American society.

One might even suggest that the refugees played some role in the American intellectuals' reacceptance of American culture, shown so clearly in the recent *Partisan Review* symposium. By their freely expressed gratitude to America, and their ability to see the many freedoms and blessings of American society, as well as its faults, the refugees set examples to the American intellectuals of the 30's and 40's who saw only the darker sides of the picture.

But we really know very little about the refugees' influence on these aspects of American intellectual life. Nor do we know how the European Ph.D., given to participation in the political struggles of his country, has affected the more aloof American intellectual; or the changes he has helped to bring about in the hierarchies and social relationships of American college faculties. We know that he has helped to improve the communication between the American and what is left of the European intellectual communities, but we do not know how this has affected both of them. And most important, we are still ignorant about the way an immigrating intellectual assimilates—how and to what extent he absorbs the intellectual culture of his new society, and how this changes his world view, frame of reference, and methods of scholarship.

There is clearly room for another study to attack directly the subject both these volumes have only approached. Methodologically, neither Crawford's "European" approach of combining impressionistic essays by five name-intellectuals, nor Kent's more typically American statistical analysis, more accurate but with fewer insights, would alone seem to be satisfactory for such a study.

Indeed, a study of the intellectual assimilation of refugees should attempt a new assimilation of the intuitive and empirical research methods usually ascribed to Europe and America respectively. What more suitable problem is there for which to develop a more balanced research approach embodying the best techniques of each?

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

NORMAN PODHORETZ has just returned to this country after two years at Cambridge University studying for his doctorate.

WILL HERBERG, author of *Judaism for Modern Man,* has lectured and conducted seminars on Jewish theology on numerous American college campuses over the past several years.

CLEMENT GREENBERG, an associate editor of COMMENTARY, is the author of a book on Joan Miró and a forthcoming book on Matisse.

MORRIS FREEDMAN is a member of the English department of the City College of New York; his most recent appearances in COMMENTARY were with "My Debut With Madame Vishnak" this past August, and another book review in September.

Readers may recall HERBERT J. GANS's study of the Jewish community of "Park Forest" (April 1951). Mr. Gans is on the staff of the planning department of the University of Pennsylvania.

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Harvest Moon

This is the month of content. The last of the Monarch butterflies soar lazily among the goldenrods, and the nights are bright with the harvest moon. Barns are fat with the bulging harvest.

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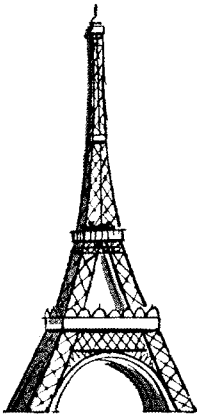

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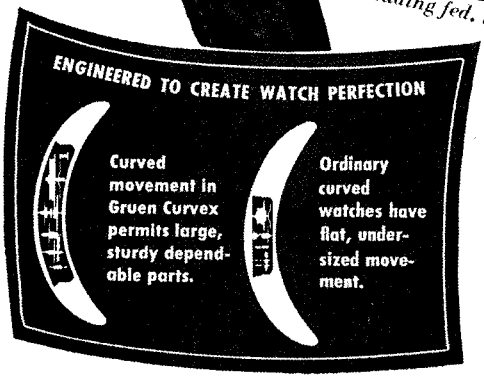
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